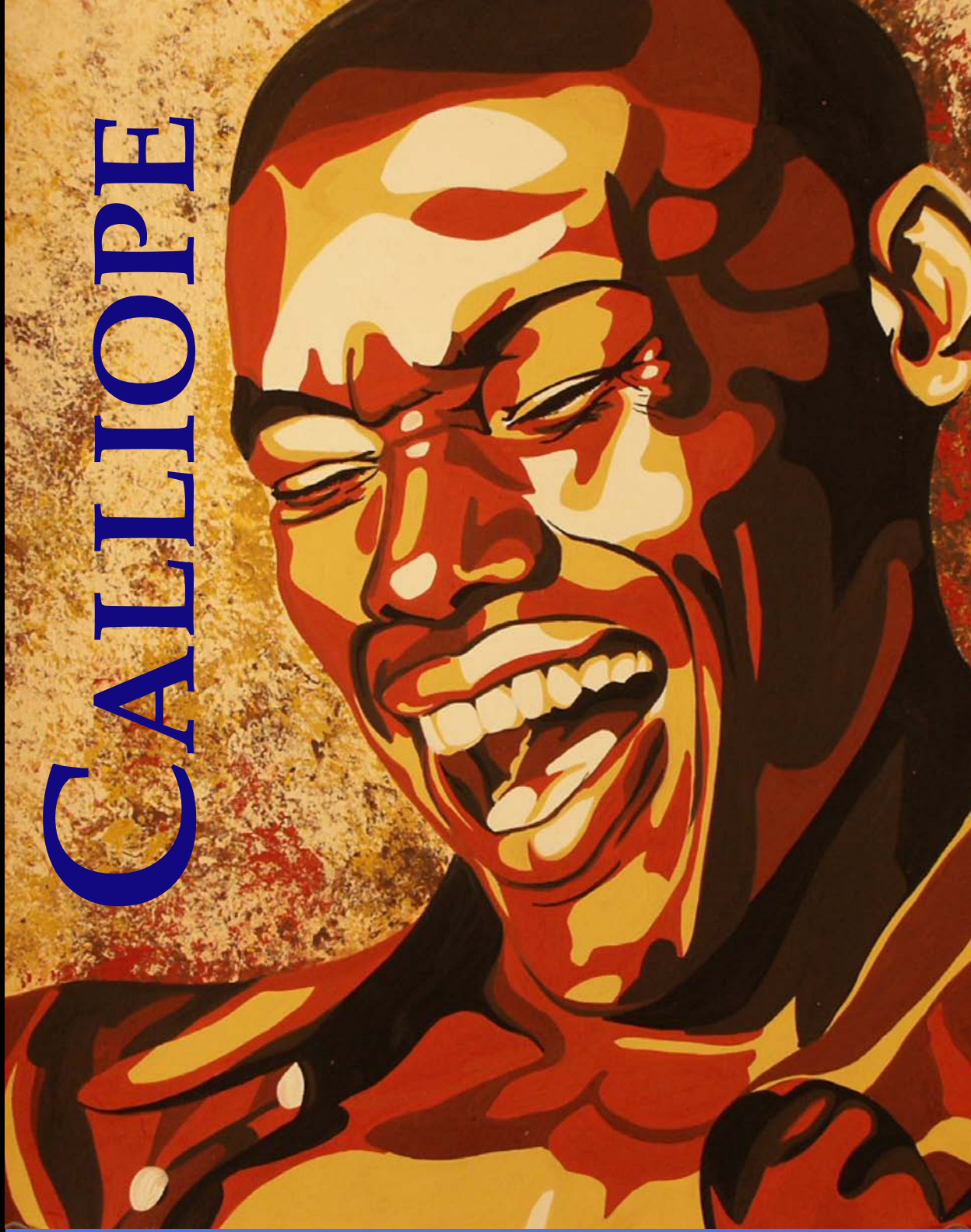

CALLIOPE

The Student Journal of Art and Literature

Volume IV
Spring 2007

Annandale Campus
Northern Virginia Community College

Calliope

The Student Journal of Art and Literature

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Acknowledgements

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calliope *kal<e>i:opi. U.S. (Gr. Kallioph)*

(beautiful-voiced), the ninth of the Muses,
presiding over eloquence and heroic poetry.

1. An instrument consisting of a series of
steam-whistles toned to produce musical notes,
played by a keyboard like that of an organ.

2. attrib. calliope hummingbird,
a hummingbird, sellula ***calliope***, of the
Western United States and Mexico.

Oxford English Dictionary

The Great Wave

Linda Jean King

Based upon the woodblock print *The Great Wave* by Hokusai

You build your cities by tranquil seas
And taunt the fires that dwell in me
As skies turn black with rising winds
You deny you see me coming

As I crash and tumble like exploding suns
You try to lasso my slippery tide
But your strongest ropes float flaccidly
As I swirl away through empty hands

Behold the old gnarled fishermen
Who ride my bough before it breaks
And while you storm and rant and rave
Your children drown in reality's wake

Swing Low

S. Ann Robinson

Second Prize - Creative Non-Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

"The bathroom's on the right, Mom."

"Here?"

"No, the other way."

"This way?"

"No, turn a little bit more."

"This way?"

"Almost." I got up and gently rotated her shoulders, pointing to the bathroom entrance.

"That's it. Okay!" Whew… a sigh.

Mom had been visiting me for two days so far into the planned thirty-day winter vacation. Her alzheimers condition had worsened since the last stay. We were still working on finding the bathroom.

The struggle to accept my caretaking role was difficult. All of my adult life I had ached for her to visit me as I traveled with my husband from one military post to another; but she had never felt she could break free of her many responsibilities to come and simply have fun. I felt cheated now, because our time would be colored by a debilitating disease instead of being the joyous sharing I had always imagined. But I was determined to have my special time with her and had planned a fun day, gazing at exotic fish in the National Aquarium, shopping, watching ice-skaters, and eating at fine restaurants. As it turned out, however, the subtitle for all of this hoped-for frivolity proved to be "Mom's Teeth." In the gift shop she took out her false teeth because she had a piece of caramel stuck in them. It took us an hour to scrape it off. Then later at the Hyatt Restaurant, I followed the horrified gaze of our server to discover Mom washing her teeth in the water pitcher. Making a hurried exit and attempting to redirect her attention, we posed for pictures after asking a strange man to hold my camera.

"Sex!" Mom yelled, grinning mischievously as the flash exploded. I mumbled a sheepish "thank you." and retrieved our camera as we scurried away from the astonished gentleman. I felt exhausted and humbled, not to mention just plain adrift in uncharted waters.

Mother had always been my port in a storm, my guru, my model of competence and efficiency. At every stage of my life she had guided me through the growth issues important to thriving. Comfort, safety, love: the early years. Encouragement, patience, praise: the pre-adolescent years. "You can do anything you can visualize," she would say, "anything you can set your mind to." And I believed her. I achieved successes in school and extracurricular activities that caused others to assume I was gifted and talented. But I wasn't. I simply followed excellent advice given by a master. In my teen years, she listened and listened and listened. In my college years, she trusted me implicitly, aided me concretely and communicated frequently. As the grandmother of my children, she loved them unconditionally, joyfully.

Her heart, her mind and her hands worked in perfect harmony as she brought forth

her best to those around her, showing by example how to serve my family, my friends, my community. We were, by any standards, financially poor, but I didn't realize it until I looked back as a more affluent adult. My mother had stopped indulging in self-pity and wouldn't allow her daughters to either. Gratitude was to be our attitude. After all, just look at all we had to be thankful for!

There's a family photo of my sister and me taken in our dusty yard, the west Texan sun and wind competing for dominance. We are scrubbed clean, standing straight and flashing huge smiles. Our homemade dresses are pressed and our hair shines in the bright sun. We look pleased with ourselves, as happy children do when posing for a picture. I know now that the only difference between us and the poignant photographs of dirty Depression-era children staring blankly through fences was the love, faith, skill and determination of our mother.

Now in my middle age, when I trusted my mother to show me how to transition to the next stage of life—how to age gracefully, how to live my elder years with courage, insight, and meaning—it was my task to show her the bathroom and shield her from astonished, gaping strangers. How could this be? Hadn't my grandmother and great-grandmother lived to become the "wise women" of their communities, dispensing love and advice well into their nineties? Hadn't Mom earned the right to be their heir? Where was justice? I railed. Where was peace? Where, I finally asked, was *God?*

Like most of humanity through the ages, I received no clear-cut answer, however, and had to simply keep trying to muddle through. What activities can be planned with a physically healthy, but mentally incompetent seventy-four-year-old woman? We could not talk about the past. Realizing she didn't remember disturbed her. I couldn't discuss my questions about aging or even plans for the future. She merely looked at me blankly. Within an hour she wouldn't be able to remember anything we said. I felt frustrated at having the past and the future inaccessible. At the same time, I became aware of how much consciousness I had been devoting to those illusory worlds.

Mom still knew who I was, thank goodness, and we could share the warmth of affectionate touches, the intimacy of eye contact. I quickly learned to plan things one step at a time, since multi-tasking was impossible. The combination yielded surprising results. We walked for hours along beautiful nature trails and gloried in the sun on our faces, squealing if we saw a deer or a rabbit. How tasty food became! How beautiful the colors around us, how sublime the music we played on a quiet evening. The words "hot tub!" defined sensual delight. Occasionally we would roll our eyes, sigh, and giggle like teenagers at the sight of a great male physique walking away from us. I began to experience what Zen masters call the "eternal now."

Nothing prepared me, however, for the sudden change that occurred two weeks into the visit. I woke up one morning to find Mom clumsily packing her suitcase.

"I want to go home." She said, throwing personal items into her bag without any attention to organizing care. At first I thought something real had happened to upset her.

"What's wrong?" I said softly, walking toward her. "I'm looking forward to the next two weeks." I tried to touch her on the shoulder, but she jerked away and looked at me quizzically.

"I want to go *home*!" she wailed defiantly. "Cindy is my life…I feel as though I *am* her! Don't keep me here! You can't make me stay!"

I couldn't believe it! My mother was acting like a rebellious teenager. But worse than that, she had lost control over her emotions, and let me know that my sister, her primary caretaker now, was her favorite. I was stunned, embarrassed for her and sorry for myself. I needed time to think— time to get my own feelings back under control.

"I have a headache," I lied, as I headed down the hall. "I need to rest a few minutes. I'll be out soon. Okay?" She looked at me like a child who has no other choice.

"Okay," she mouthed softly, closing her lips in a thin, pouting line and crossing her arms in front of her. She looked away as tears formed.

I battled long-suppressed demons in the safety of my bedroom. All those times she had refused to visit me… times I had been so homesick! My alcoholic father would not let her come, she would explain. Or, my grandmother was ill and needed her. It was always something. I had reluctantly believed her. But now, what did all that mean? Were those merely excuses? She really didn't like being with me at all? I sobbed into a pillow as suppressed pain from the past met the raw grief of the present.

Eventually I spent my tears and slipped into a breathing meditation. Then half-dozing, I allowed early memories to quietly enter my consciousness. My first memory was of our bedroom—Daddy's, Mama's and mine. I remember where my bed stood and how I stood in it. The floors were concrete, and later I learned to love the cold against my bare feet. I can still hear the screen door open and close and the sounds from the neighborhood surrounding it. Sometimes the screen door opened to other tears, Mama's tears. We had a silver butane tank that I pretended was my horse and a green wooden picnic table where birthday cakes were served and where Mama quietly cried in the twilight when I was very young. Supposedly, when my older sister was three, Mama tied her to that table to keep her from running away while I was being bathed. But my sister's rebellion did not cause the tears I saw from my room. No, they were the grief of dreams lost and an acknowledgement of a life much harder than planned. And yet Mother matured into a patient, kind woman, finally learning to love everyone unconditionally. I had watched her change and grow from a frustrated young mother into a mature, wise and centered woman. No one had ever celebrated my mother's life to my liking, and now even I was one of the ones who always wanted to be on the receiving end. Could I also learn to love unconditionally? I dried my own tears of loss and acceptance, and went to her.

"Okay, okay." I soothed her gently. "I'll let you go. I promise. Not today, but soon. Everything will be all right." She relaxed. We hugged.

I didn't realize then that I had indeed let her go, and that we had hugged goodbye. The next morning when I awoke she was sitting in a chair beside our bed, humming softly.

"Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home…" When she saw me sitting up, she stared for a long moment, wide-eyed. "Who are you?" she asked. "Who *are* you?"

And with that final question, my mother had once again given me everything I needed to go on.

Flour In My Hair

Linda Jean King

What a help I was
Rolling dough
Pressing it into a glass pan
Sticky powdered fingers
White smudges on my face
And flour in my hair

I watched in awe
As peelings deftly fell away
Sweetened Macintosh wedges lay
Uncomfortably beneath a pale cover
Patterned in fork pricks
And edged with fingerprint waves

Cinnamon tickled my impatience
As I peeked into the oven
And encouraged sugary bubbles
To turn the crust golden
And then . . . before it cooled
I stole the first bite

It's been years now
Since I tasted anything so sweet
And wore with delight
Flour in my hair

Katherine

Martha Johnson

First Prize - Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

The pictures are appearing again.

She holds her pencil tightly, the way some little ones hold a favorite toy, lower lip stuck out in concentration. The pictures weave in and out of focus, and she struggles to see this one. Maybe it will be the castle in New York that she saw, or maybe the man on the train. She closes her eyes and tries to see it.

As if by magic, the drawing begins to shape itself on the paper, the pencil moving her hand rather than her hand moving the pencil. She watches in wonder as the butterfly from that garden place appears. She's not sure what kind of place it was except that it was green and pretty and soft to the touch, and that the butterfly was there.

She hears words, and the scratching of a pencil on paper. Not her pencil. Someone else's. That white-coat woman, Maria, who says, "Katherine, you're *incredible*" all the time. Those words mean nothing. They aren't like the pictures.

***

It wasn't always like this. Once, she was at home and she could lie on the floor with Bugs Bunny on the TV and soft jazz coming from the kitchen, and she would draw things. Sometimes from the cartoons. Sometimes her mother. She liked it when the picture of Mama appeared in her mind and she could put it onto the paper. She still saw her mother sometimes but now the picture was fuzzy and gray and hard to see. Too fuzzy to draw from.

It had been like that once. But then something went wrong, she wasn't sure what, and then the people had come, saying, "We're from the county." What was the county? In her mind she had seen her pencils, and had run to get them. They tried to stop her, but she wouldn't leave until the pencils were clutched in her little fist.

And then the long, long, endless weeks of being watched. They would watch her draw, ask her to draw things, and she would cry when she couldn't see them in her mind for the tears inside. They would say, "Katherine, you draw some things so well. Why can't you draw this for us?" And she would shake her head, because the words made no sense. Even that name, Katherine, it had no meaning to its owner.

Now there were always people, people with cameras and microphones, and "Here, little girl, here are some new pencils for you." But no, she wouldn't take them. She liked hers—the red one, the green one, the worn-down yellow one that was little more than a stub. She liked to draw with them, she liked to see the patterns they made. She liked it a lot when the pictures appeared and she could see them grow on the paper like Virginia creeper in graphite.

***

"Katie, this is beautiful."

Words. Always words. She wants pictures but can't ask because this world, it's a word

world, and there's little room for a little girl with pictures in her head.

She gets up and goes across the room. *Tap, tap, tap, tap* go her small feet on the floor. The sound of these new shoes, it isn't a bad sound. It is a comforting sound, a sound she likes to hear. When she is waiting to see a picture she taps her shoes on the ground just to hear that comforting sound.

Here is another white-coat lady. Not the one who is always with her, another one, who is younger. She looks down at the girl. "Do you need your pencils sharpened?" she asks.

Katherine shakes her head. Tugs on the white coat corner. So bright, this fabric. Bright, but not soft. Mama's hands were soft.

"Show me what you want," the lady says.

Katherine pulls her across the room to the small table where she draws. The nice little green chairs. Her pencils.

Red, green.

No yellow.

And the little girl's cry fills the rooms as quickly as a fire alarm, high and loud and long, screaming and screaming wordlessly until the room is full of footsteps and words and people, and Katherine in the middle, screaming because one pencil is missing. The yellow one. The special yellow pencil. It was the only one she could draw her favorite things with. It was important, more than the chipped red one or the green one with shiny stickers on it.

"Katherine! Katherine!" they say. But she doesn't hear. She is crying out, hard and long, "Mama, mama, mama, the yellow pencil—!" More words than she has ever said before, more than she ever will. Words, not pictures. The pictures are breaking up, shattering, maybe disappearing just like Mama. Where did she go? The yellow pencil, maybe it is with her.

And the people are crowding around, talking—"Well, *find* another pencil!"—and out of all that, one figure comes sweeping down through all that mess to find Katherine and put her arms around her.

"Mama, mama, mama," Katherine cries. "I lost the yellow pencil."

"I know," the woman says. "I know."

Maria looks over the shoulder of the little girl she is holding. The assembly there looks back at her. No one can say anything. There is nothing to say.

***

They find the pencil soon enough, but Katherine is another story. She sits in the corner, facing the wall, rocking back and forth. The pictures are broken, lying like shards of sharp glass on the road. She can't see any now, not even the butterfly she drew, which is lying forgotten and forlorn on a table.

Maria is in the room, and so is Dr. Taylor. They talk quietly, but not too quietly for Katherine to hear.

"She thought you were her mother?" Dr. Taylor says.

"That's what she thought," Maria says back.

"Have they found that pencil of hers yet?"

"Yes. But she won't look at me. I'm afraid we'll lose her if there's no change soon."

Dr. Taylor only nods.

***

They put her favorite shows on the T.V., Bugs Bunny and all the others. Soft jazz, just like she used to hear with Mama, who danced and sang along, plays in the background. But Katherine can't hear, or won't. Her eyes are glazed.

Something happened when she lost the pencil, when she said those words. Something in her mind changed, and she has to find out what before it can all go back to normal. She has to do this.

She is trying to remember something. She knows faintly that Maria and the others are worried about her. But she can't stop to assure them that she is okay, not until she has remembered this one thing. Just a little thing. It'll only take a little bit of time.

***

Sitting at the desk and drawing. Maria, who wasn't Mama after all, sitting and watching.The yellow pencil, found, in her hand. Katherine sits and draws.

The pictures came back after a week, and a few days after that she started to put them on paper again. Now it is almost as if that afternoon never happened.

She still does not talk much, even to Maria, who she thought was her Mama. Maria isn't Mama, but now she understands the way Mama did. She tells the other white-coat people, "Come back in a little while. She's busy."

Katherine works hard, bending over the paper, shielding it from Maria's eyes with her other hand. Now this is a present for Maria, just like Mama and Katherine gave each other on Christmases and birthdays. Oh, it was such fun.

"What are you drawing, Katie?" Maria asks.

Katherine shakes her head slowly, rocking it from side to side like the little dogs in the back of cars. Her eyes never move. She looks straight down at the paper.

Somehow, now this picture is clear, though it wasn't before. Now she can see it as clear as day, the way she used to when the real thing was still near. Katherine looks at the picture and smiles. Little pearly teeth, white, like the paper they bring her every day.

She holds out the paper to Maria. Tries to speak. For a moment, the words catch, the way they always do when she tries to speak. Finally she gets them out.

"This is my Mama," Katherine says.

I loosen the vice, cast off.
Lament the loss of linear perspective.
Fungus, fun guys, a fun guise in deed.
Reflections on the surface, shimmering images bounce—
Back.
Forth.

Reality.

Insanity.

Paul? are you seeing this?
My Lord…

…Finally:

Epiphany.
We whisper to the fish from our boat; we whisper from our Father's throat.
We beg and we forgive—we swear and we commit.
This is It. This. is.
Life—fresh and fragile.
I ebb lucidly, anchored again.

The Giving Man

John McDonald

The sun, blazes without despair,
Illuminates the village square.
The stage is set the day is fair.
The fat man's axe glints in the air.

A scurvy scoundrel pushes on,
He hums himself one last song.
Steeping up the final stair,
The fat man's axe glints in the air.

People gather from far and near,
To watch death play out here.
The crows are set, they watch the pair.
The fat man's axe glints in the air.

Kneeling down before the sun,
The man knows his days are done.
Transfixed, the people stare.
The fat man's axe glints in the air.

A holy prayer the priest does cite,
Give this man to the light.
As quick as lighting, with startled fright,
A scoundrel's day turns to night.

Twosome Tangos

Susanna Katherine Fix

He was a riddle...
One that you wished you could forget.
And I was his wildcard...
Wriggling free from his wordplays
And pulling him onto my dance floor
For a tango he'd never danced before.
We always swayed in circles—
Sooner or later
Falling to the ground
Where once again
His riddling self was king,
And he never let you forget it.
But then we'd rise up to the strains
Of some new melody—
The cadence beating freedom
Through my soul.
And I, his little Jack of Hearts,
Would take a turn in step
That threw him off his guard...

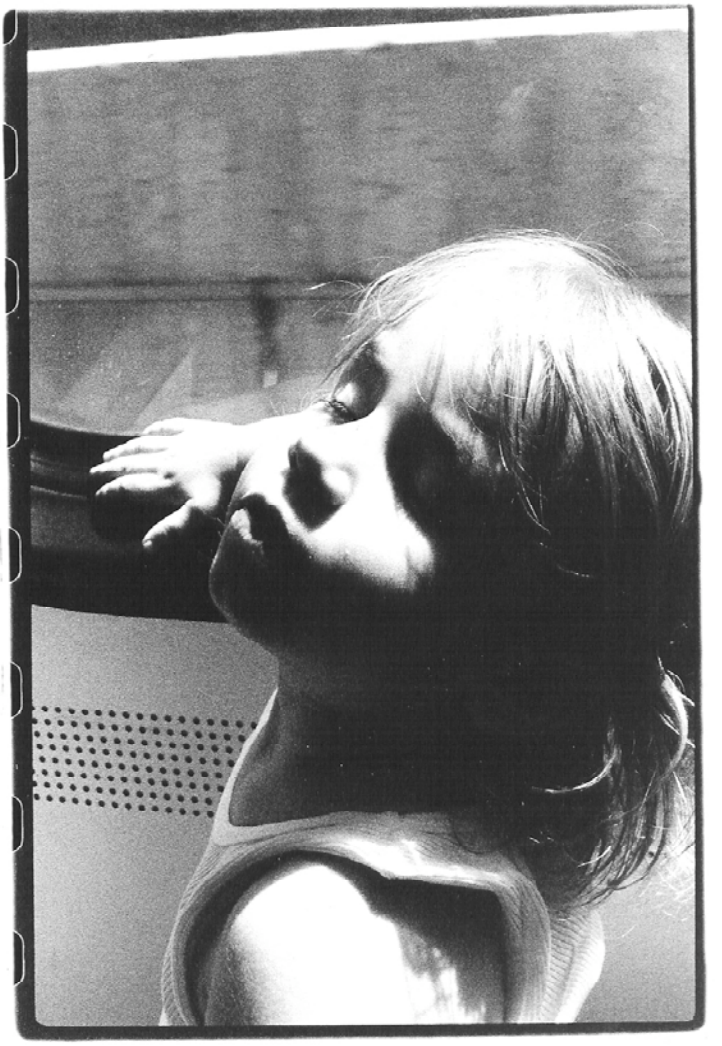
The question
Was never
Who would win out in the end—
The labyrinth of riddles
Or the cunning wildcard.
The question only
Was when
The one
Or the other
Would dance too close
To the edge of himself
And lose sight of the other
Irrevocably.

We spun
And twirled
And dipped
And slid—
And neither we
Nor those around us
Ever
Could have foretold the outcome

Of these two
Defiant paradoxes,
Bound to each other
By their own inconsistencies.

Untitled Photograph

Christy Walsh



The Funeral of Peter Pan

Sean Brian Fitzgerald

Honorable Mention - Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

During a funeral it should rain. It should be gloomy and damp when you bury somebody and the sky should look like a fake gray-painted sky from a black and white movie about Frankenstein, but on the day that they put Peter Pan in the ground it was beautiful outside. The sun was shining and birds were singing and the temperature was perfect with a pleasant breeze and the lovely weather made it all the more awkward for the mourners and their sadness.

There were no tears when the lost boys lowered the casket, only somber expressions and gazes fixed upon the earth. Words were said by some hired holy man that nobody knew, flowers were tossed into the grave and everybody marched inside for the wake. Alice was quiet and respectful and in control of herself but the look behind her mask said that she had known this was coming. Alice had seen and lived through more than most and it was hard now for death, for anything, to surprise her. Dorothy's eyes were big as dinner plates and pleaded for reassurance; sweet, naive Dorothy was a stranger to anything unpleasant and true and Alice and Mowgli stayed close to her and did what they could to shield her, to absorb what force they could from the rogue wave of reality that Peter Pan's death had loosed upon poor, fragile, innocent Dorothy.

Oliver Twist tried to make a speech but only wound up embarrassing himself. He spoke of the irony of burying (what had once been) the boy who would never grow old and ended by saying, "in the end, the crocodile of time will devour us all," but the whole thing stank of an attempt to be profound by someone who is merely average, an effort by a little man to try to be the big man who fixes everything. Only Dorothy was genuinely impressed and she didn't know any better. Pinocchio scoffed openly at Twist's sad effort and drew the first of many harsh glances that he would receive from Mowgli that afternoon.

Pinocchio drank too much and became loud and obnoxious. He slapped people on the back and cheerfully told stories about the times he had had with Peter Pan that were not appropriate for the occasion. Mowgli moved toward him threateningly more than once but wise Alice could see what was really happening and held Mowgli back every time. Soon Pinocchio was an incoherent, babbling mess and Mowgli had almost reached the end of his endurance and Alice and a few of the lost boys took Pinocchio aside and suggested as diplomatically as possible that he had probably had enough and should really be making his way home.

Against much advice to the contrary, Pinocchio refused a ride home and sped out of the parking lot, swerving, with many concerned onlookers anticipating disaster. Nobody followed Pinocchio, so nobody saw what followed. No one saw him reach his apartment against all odds and drunkenly slump over the steering wheel. Nobody heard the pathetic, awful sound of a grown man (a real boy) crying as Pinocchio started blubbering and repeating in a weak, strained voice into his dashboard: "Clap your hands if you believe in fairies, clap your hands if you believe in fairies."

No one knew what to say to Wendy and to Tinkerbelle, or they knew not to say any-

thing. The bruises of those bad last years and days with Peter Pan were still fresh upon their souls, a legacy of nights of anger and words that cut. Dorothy wanted to talk to Wendy but Alice steered her away, Sweet Dorothy could never comprehend the final portion of Peter Pan's life wheN the faerie dust was way out of hand and his laughing face was frozen into a snarling mask of hatred and indulgence. All Alice said to Wendy was, "He's gone now," and Wendy nodded.

The lost boys were the first to leave, and they did so abruptly and with little fanfare. They had stayed with Peter Pan until the ugly end, they had carried his body and put it in the ground, and each of them privately thought that whatever obligation they had had to the man had been fulfilled and there was no point in hanging around and moping over his passing any further. Oliver Twist wandered from person to person shaking hands before his departure, trying to arrange future meetings over drinks with everyone and receiving a few polite and noncommittal responses of interest.

Alice, Mowgli and Dorothy left together. First Dorothy was seen safely home and given final (and half true) reassurances that despite what had happened to Peter Pan, the world was still the place she had always believed it to be. Before Alice went home she looked at Mowgli in a way that she never had looked at him before, and then she put her head on his shoulder and the two of them sat and contemplated the absence of Peter Pan together for a while.

It was only Tinkerbelle and Wendy left. They were the two that had best known Peter Pan, and they had never been friends with each other. Together, they walked outside and stared into the still open grave. It was Tinkerbelle that spoke first.

"I never stopped loving him. Until the end, I never stopped." Wendy said nothing, but maybe her silence spoke to Tinkerbelle. She spoke again: "He only loved you though."

"He only loved himself," said Wendy, and she turned to face the woman that she had long ago stolen Peter Pan from. "He was a bastard to us both and now neither of us have him." Tinkerbelle did not return her rival's stare, and continued to look down upon the casket of the man she loved.

"He was beautiful once," said Tinkerbelle, and turned to meet Wendy's gaze.

"He was," said Wendy, "once." She turned her back on Tinkerbelle and on the tomb of Peter Pan, and walked away into her future. The weather was inappropriately perfect. Tinkerbelle stayed a while longer, and then there was nothing else to do but leave the graveyard and continue living.

Sabotage

Susanna Katherine Fix

And he was quiet
Following the venom.
And I was quiet
In my rage
At the cruel bite—
Quiet,
For the pain of poison
Stole my breath.
He was quiet,
As I waited
In the triage room,
While others—
Better versed in life—
Proclaimed their diagnosis.
And I was quiet,
Taking in my options—
Taking in their verdict—
Desperate for a cure—
Crying out
For just one miracle.
He was quiet
While I lay
Between the sterile sheets
Of my soul's hospital bed,
In Intensive Care,
Wondering if I'd ever
See the other side
Of my existence.
—Absent and still—
As others
Worked around the clock,
Cleaning up the mess
He'd left behind.
And I was quiet,
Because speaking
Pulled at the stitches
Still so fresh
On my rent heart.
Words only reopened
the new-inflicted wounds.
He was quiet
Every time

I made a wrong move—
Opened myself up
To the pain so near the surface.
—Absent from observing
Every night I bled onto my pillow.
He was quiet
—Silent—
—Oh so still—
That weary day they checked me out,
And wheeled my crippled soul
Down the stark hallways
Of our memories.
Quiet—
As I was pushed into the sunlight,
With my indefinite prescription
In my hands,
And strict instructions
To abandon
—Once for all—
My hopeful habit
And begin a life
I do not recognize.
Quiet still—
As I let go
So slow,
And find myself,
In moments,
Tempted to return
To what I knew—
Find myself
So hungry
For at least one final
Satiation—
Just two words of healing
From his quiet mouth:
"I'm sorry."

Where Dreams Spring Eternal

Edgar Lizandro Bustamante

Third Prize - ESL
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

There is a famous question that is usually asked when a group of immigrant friends get together. When we hear that question, our thoughts, feelings and desires join together. "What is the first place you would like to go once you get your green card?" It is the famous question. We often agree that the first place is our hometown. Furthermore, in my hometown there is a special place that is very important to me. I have not been there for years, though the memories of that wonderful place are still fresh in my mind. When I was a kid, I used to spend every summer there with my family. I have been there so many times that I can say where everything is without any hesitation. The place is a small house in a neighborhood where all the houses are the same. I like its layout and enjoy each room; nonetheless, there are three parts I like the most: the patio, the living room and the dining room.

Besides the color, all the houses in my grandparents' neighborhood are the same. The front wall of the house has two metal doors that open to the main patio, which is the first part of the house. The big door is used only for the cars and has decorations on it. The door is basically made of black wrought iron, outlining the images of birds and plant shapes. The small one is used for the passage of people. This one is also made of black wrought iron with decorations. Neither of them have glass; thus, we can see through them to the main patio from the street. The main patio is a 10 x 5 meter area with a small garden on the right side which has red and white roses, violets and yellow daisies. The flowers do not have a specific arrangement in the garden; they are mixed which gives me the sensation of a colorful blanket. The flowers' fragrance fills the house with an exquisite aroma comparable only to the Garden of Eden. The patio has no ceiling and it used to have an enormous garden filling its entire dimension with a narrow path that connected the small iron door to the wooden door leading to the living room.

The living room is a small square of 5 x 5 meters with three walls. The front wall is the one that is connected to the main patio. It has the heavy wooded door with glass in its center and a small window with aluminum bars on it. The living room also has three old, brown, wooden doors; two of them are on the left wall and link to two different bedrooms. The other one is on the right wall and links to the only bathroom. The walls in the living room are yellow and they have been the same color for as long as I can remember. There are many pictures hanging on them.

All of the photos are old, black and white, and related to the family. My great-grandfather is in one of them. He is wearing an old-fashioned black suit from the twenties with a vest of the same material. His gaze is firm and serious. I think that this picture summarizes his personality because my grandfather told me that he was angry all the time. I believe it is the oldest photo in the family. There is another one with my grandmother in it. That picture was taken one year before she died in 1972. I never met her. She seems very happy in it and she is wearing a long blue fancy dress and every piece of gold jewelry she had. The last picture that always catches my attention is the one with my two grandparents and their

eight daughters and their only son. The quality is really bad but I can recognize each member of the family. I can't believe that in this picture my uncle is a cute baby, my grandfather has hair and my mother is eighteen; she looks as beautiful as always.

The furniture in the living room is very old and strange, but I love it because it has sentimental value. There is a T.V. in the living room, and it is the oldest T.V. I have ever seen in my life. I always have to turn it on 15 minutes before it shows something on the screen. It has two knobs, one for the volume and the other for the channels and obviously it doesn't have a remote control. Even though I always have to stand up to change the channel, I really like the old T.V. because it has good quality and because it was my grandfather's first T.V. Also, at one corner of the room there is a red phone. The old-fashioned phone with its revolving dial and its small cord always reminds me of the game I used to play with my cousins. We would call random numbers and make fun of people. Since there was no caller ID at that time, we never got in trouble. There is also a couch which has become smaller each year. It has a wooden frame stuffed with cushioning and covered in soft, green upholstery. It has springs at the bottom and hard chair arms. It has been in the same place, in the same position and has been in almost all the pictures taken in the last 20 years.

The living room has no back wall because the dining room is connected to it. It is a small room with a door at the back that leads to the kitchen. The walls are old and white with scratches and lines made by time and the weather. There is a big painting of "The Last Supper" on the right wall. It has a beautiful, gold-color frame made of metal with streamers. The clock on the left wall is fancy, baroque and antique. Its frame and hands are made of wood and the background is of yellow plastic. The numbers are big and I can see them even from the street. I believe that the clock is magic because it seems that the time goes slowly, and because I have never in my entire life seen someone change the batteries, it gives me the sensation of eternity. There is a huge table in the center of the small dining room. The wooden table is a piece of antiquity. It was made in 1907 and its legs had to be cut in order to get it in to the house. The white tablecloth is always very clean and is decorated with flowers, which gives me a sensation of serenity. There are ten seats that belong at the table and they are made of the same wood as the table. They have high backs and extravagant armrests. Almost the entire family could eat at that table.

My grandparents' house instills in me a feeling of quietness, security and happiness that no other place in the world could. Every single detail is in my memory. All the furniture, photos and ornaments are placed in the same location: the old T.V. and the phone, the baroque clock and the antique table, the pictures on the wall. I close my eyes and imagine that I am there opening the door, walking through the patio, smelling the fragrances of the flowers in the small garden and of the table filled with the most delicious and aromatic dishes. There is no place like this and when I'm here I never want to leave. The old phone is ringing and nobody answers, still ringing, but nothing…I open my eyes and I have to turn off my alarm. I know that someday it will be the old phone that's ringing again.

Dream of the Yoniebernaut

Sean Brian Fitzgerald

Third Prize - Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

The universe congealed like a fog of shape and color and the yoniebernaut felt the earth beneath him. The trees yawned impossibly high with the tallest branches scraping the zenith and the lowest bows bending to the ground like stairs and the yoniebernaut was compelled to climb them to the moon, to the apex, to the castles of giants in a landscape of clouds. He ascended up, up, up and the bark was rough beneath his hands and the odor of the fruits was sweet and strange and the floor of the forest shrank beneath him and the yoniebernaut reflected on who he was and found that he didn't know, and some instinct within him asked, "am I dreaming? Is it real, or is all of this a dream?"

The yoniebernaut stopped climbing and walked to the end of a branch like a sidewalk and stared out to the horizon and there was a world between here and there. Every bit of space was full of something moving and changing and detailed and colorful and it was too much, too much detail to be a dream, but still. "If this is a dream," thought the yoniebernaut, "if this is a dream then I can fly." He willed himself to take off and nothing happened, so he raised one foot and then the other and he hovered in the air, and the yoniebernaut arched his eyebrows and smiled and SWOOSH! The wind rushed past his ears and the land unrolled beneath him as he soared upon the oxygen like a dolphin, fields and jungles and mountains were swept away below him as he danced past, and he landed by a pond like a dragonfly and there was a girl there, feeding the ducks.

She was a real girl, a dream girl, a real dream girl. She was small and had brown hair in pigtails and a head like an upside down triangle. The yoniebernaut told her his name and she said that her name was "Beth Schwartz" and he sat beside her and they threw bread into the water and the ducks swam up and pecked crumbs out of the ripples. She was nice and she wondered aloud if she was dreaming, and the yoniebernaut grinned and was going to tell her but pain split the sky (really, the sky itself was in pain) and the yoniebernaut was

sucked
upward and
backward
through a
straw
and the boy rolled over in

bed so that he was not lying on his arm anymore and his shoulder stopped hurting. The haze of sleep was thick about him and he remembered a face and a name, "Beth Schwartz," and who was that? It was no one he knew, it was a dream person, it was somebody that he met in a dream, and the waves of sleep washed over him and he felt the beginnings of a dream trickle down from his pineal gland like information.

The world formed itself like blobs of colored oil floating on the sea until they settled into a house and a lawn and the yoniebernaut was standing on the lawn and the house was the house that he grew up in. A dog as white as winter brought the yoniebernaut a stick

and he took it and he threw it and the dog leapt into the air to catch it in his teeth and bring it back. The yoniebernaut kneeled to pet the dog and he was uneasy, there was something wrong with the dog and the lawn and the house and the universe, some important fact that he had forgotten.

The yoniebernaut walked down the street in his neighborhood and the dog stayed by his ankles. It was fall and the sun shone through the orange and amber leaves of the trees casting diamond shaped shadows on the road. Children jumped rope in front of their homes and ran lemonade stands out of their driveways like Norman Rockwell children, and there were never any cars. The road climbed over a hill and became windier and narrower on the other side, now it was a dirt footpath flanked by sunflowers and pelicans leading to a small red brick building with smoke coming out of the chimney. The yoniebernaut grew smaller as he walked down the path until the dog was bigger than he was, now the dog was a friendly shaggy dragon and the yoniebernaut was a little boy. The dog waited outside as the yoniebernaut toddled up the steps and opened the door of the red building.

He was in kindergarten, this was where the yoniebernaut went to kindergarten. There was his cubby in the wall for his lunch and his raincoat and there were the blocks and there was his tiny desk and his tiny chair. He sat down at his desk and took out his crayons and began to color. The little girl across from him asked, "What's your name?" and he told her, and she said that her name was "Beth Schwartz," and then the yoniebernaut was not a little boy anymore and Beth Schwartz was not a little girl.

He was a grown man sitting in too small a chair in his old kindergarten classroom and he knew that he was dreaming, and she was a grown woman sitting across from him with her dark hair in pigtails and her face like a female triangle turned upside down. "Are you dreaming too, Beth Schwartz?" the yoniebernaut wondered. "Are you a real person asleep somewhere, dreaming of me dreaming of you dreaming of me dreaming of you? Am I in your dream or are you in mine? Will I see you again, in dreams? Have I seen you before, in dreams? Am I a real person asleep somewhere, dreaming of you dreaming of me dreaming of you dreaming of me?" There were no answers, and Beth Schwartz and the yoniebernaut sat and colored together until the world dissolved again and it was time to be

pulled
backwards
and outwards
and awaken into a different sort of dream.

Beach Week

Alan Strom

First Prize - Poetry
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

Let the good times roll and roll and roll and
Until death do us part we'll be engaged in the quickening
Of forgetting why we're alive at all at all
But don't get so serious, man. Just soak it up
And up and up and up because life is such a down.
I politely sidestep from inside to out
Where cigarettes and stars collide
And Buffett's complacency is sealed through the glass
Of a disillusioned onlooker betrayed
by the sponging of the week, so I go
Farther, and farther, and farther to the horizon
Hoping to find company frustrated with their company
But it's 5:30 in the morning and all is dead, dead,
And dying to live. In that house I smell a rot
That circulates through my being and clouds
Any liberated feelings to be free, free,
Nothing's free and the cost is never told
Until we're washed up groping for life
In the fishy murk of high tide.
Pessimistic pondering curls me
Into the rising sun and with a peek
I smile.

Limerick

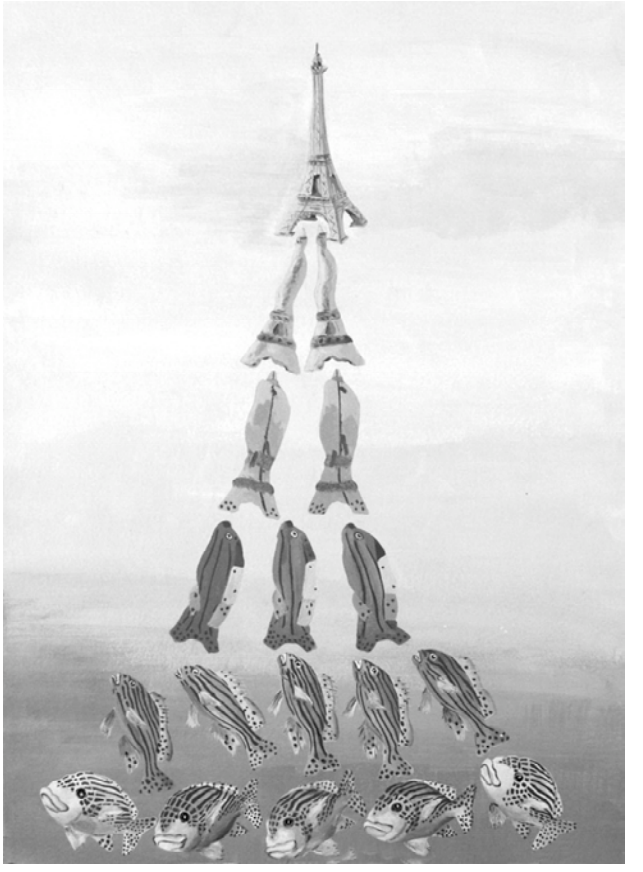
Kareem Shoura

Second Prize - ESL
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

There is a young man from Egypt
Who will never forget it
He loves his first land
And its beautiful sand
So he keeps commemorative sand in his pocket

Dreaming McCue

Deborah



Al-Fishawy Café, a Tradition that Keeps Going — Rouba Haddad

Honorable Mention - ESL
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

I've always wanted to visit that popular place which is located in the heart of the most ancient bazaar, Khan Al-Khalili, in the city of the Pyramids, Cairo. I finally got the chance to go there. Al-Fishawy Café, this cozy place which is a little difficult to find, is situated in a very busy market. This market is famous for its small shops and nonstop movement, full of hustle and bustle. Souvenir shops line both sides of all the narrow streets. Vendors wait at the entrance of each of these stores, and if they think you are from Russia, they address you in Russian and from Italy, they welcome you in Italian. If you still don't answer, they invite you into their shop in English. To say the truth, they are really true professional tourist attractors. Amazing. Even passersby or anyone you ask will be helping you to get there.

Finally we arrive at our destination, the Fishawy Café. Sitting in this café is very intriguing; shoppers are passing by the narrow area between the small tables and chairs whose rips are covered with silver duct tape. The traveling sales people walk around the tables trying to sell you different things, such as glass pyramids, belly dancer ribbons that fit on girls' heads, and plenty of other souvenirs.

As soon as you walk in, a waiter will find a place to seat you. Soon, another waiter will come to take your order. Orders are yelled to the kitchen immediately. Waiters fly out between the crowds with their balancing trays full of orders. Fishawy Café is very famous for its hot mint tea, Turkish coffee, and the shisha. The shisha is a traditional Middle Eastern device for smoking tobacco. It is made from a glass pot at the bottom filled with water, with a hole to insert a long smoking pipe in it, and at the top of that, there is the tobacco plate where you put the flavored tobacco that is lit up with charcoal. The shisha is offered in different flavors such as apple, strawberry and melon.

What is so engaging about sitting there is that you are happily forced to share the extra chairs you have at your table with strangers because of the small space of this café. Now you have an instant group of tourists that you have to converse with whether you like it or not. There are even lots of people who are waiting for someone to leave so they can steal his or her place. Looking around, you can see the amazed faces from all over the world, people from different nationalities who are staring around them with great curiosity, wondering what is going on in this loud, dusty, and crowded place.

Fishawy in its organized chaos attracts both Egyptians and foreigners. It reflects Cairo and the people that live there. This is a unique place to visit and to come to appreciate how people live in that part of the world.

Streetlamps

Dana Leader

suburbia
never goes dark
the streetlamps
create a near-twilight
even at 11 pm
that purple hazy sky
has always
been my favorite sight
some like the stars
I like the reflection
of streetlamps on clouds

Filigree Tree

Marilyn Geldzahler

MOMIJI no ENKA (Japanese Maples' Song)

Linda Jean King

Second Prize - Poetry
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

Fall's slanting rays proclaim they now have turned
To bright red flames that dance across Kyoto.
The cool-nipped breeze caresses kimonos
And stirs the autumn passions that still burn.
Through mountain mist I barely can discern
The bamboo gate that leads through cedar rows
Of trees that brush the clouds for daylight's glow
Before the sun sets down and night returns.

I stroll pass washi cranes that need not fly
For beauty clings to colored wings, and fans
Unfold life's hidden truths before my eyes.
When falling momiji leaves gently land
Upon my moss green path of winter sighs
I recall the enka's words "like baby hands."

Friendship

My Trang Le

In life, people usually receive love, pleasures, and happiness from their parents and relatives. Moreover, everybody has a need to create a relationship with others outside their families. This relationship is called a friendship. A meaningful life is when people have good friendships. To maintain relationships with other people is not easy. A real friendship needs loyalty, respect, and helpfulness between the two people. It also expresses kindness, care, and sympathy for one to another. A friendship should come from a person's heart. Another thing is that they do not consider money, wealth, and religion or skin color. Friends do not exploit one another.

Every person was born and brought up in a country. When we were little, we were taught good things to do and bad things to avoid by our parents. When we grew up, we began going to school at the age of six. At school we started getting knowledge from our teachers and books. First, we study how to treat and respect everyone. Then we learn how to read, how to write and how to say something nice to people. In fact, when we were at school, we spent time with our instructors and classmates. Simply speaking, when we become adults, we gradually realize how we like people, our friends, and how happy we feel whenever someone does something nice for us or helps us to get something done.
For example, when we do not understand a question in English, one of our classmates helps and explains it to us until we get the answer. Additionally, because the communication between people happen everyday in life, so people like to find new friends. Friends who have the same pleasures, interest, and purposes build good friendship. They can share their sorrow and happiness. Actually, friendship differs from one person to another. It depends on what kind of people we make friends with. Friends trust and have concern for each other. They are willing to help each other whenever one of them has a difficult time or gets in trouble.

In life, we sometimes have many happy and sad things. For instances, we feel happy if we succeed in work or we receive a birthday card from someone. Nobody wants to fail. Most of us always expect to have good things in life. In some respects, life is a struggle. It is not totally pink as many people think. The ups and downs in one's life change sometimes. As you can see, happiness, success, and luck usually come and go. These things come to us by surprise. Nothing exists forever, even our money. A rich man may have a lot of money, but if he has an incurable disease such as cancer or HIV, money will have no value.

People cannot deny that money assures a good life. We can buy anything we like with money, or we can go anywhere the world. In other words, money is not everything. Money cannot buy good health even though we can use it to pay for everything we need. Moreover, money cannot buy true love. Therefore, the useful thing is a real friendship, and love between people.

In some cases, friends become closer to each other than sisters or brothers. For example, I have had long friendships with close friends when I lived in my country. One of them is Tu An. She is a very nice and friendly girl. She was kind. She picked me up and dropped me off at home when we attended university in my country. She treated me as her sister. Now, my friends and I live very far away from each other; nevertheless, I still remember them. I still remember that, before leaving my homeland, two of my friends gave me advice.

It was over two years ago. Whenever I think of them, I recall what they told me. Let me share with you what they said to me.

One female friend said, "You have to remember that whenever you have money, you should send a part of it to your parents and keep in touch with your family. Whether you get married or not you should think of your mom and dad." Then she continued, "Because my sister also lived in the United States, she did not pay much attention to our parents." My friend may be concerned that someday I will forget my parents when I have a new life in a new country. I really understand what she told me. I always keep her words in mind.

Then a male friend told me, "There are a few things you have to keep in mind and you have to do them." He continued, "First, you must do your work everyday. Next, you should not waste your money, because if you waste your money, you will be poor. This will make your life more difficult. Also, you have to keep yourself healthy. Try to make a plan for each day. You should avoid working so hard that you get sick. If you get sick, you will die soon."

These were good pieces of advice. Whenever I feel unhappy because of something, I often do not want to do anything. I am thankful for the words from my friends that help me stand up and overcome any trouble. I think of their words and recall my family and of course, all of them expect me to be brave and be successful in life. Therefore, I usually tell myself that I have to try my best so that I can reach my goal. I hope that I will be successful in life in order to find a job in the future. When I earn enough money, I will go back to my homeland. I really expect this to happen. I want to see my family and friends whom I love most in life.

In my opinion, I feel very glad when I have built a friendship with my close friends in my country. I wonder now, whether with a busy life in my homeland, my friends still remember me. However, I will never forget my confidants in my country.

Anywhere we go, happiness, success, and failure often go with us in our lives. Again the ups and downs in life makes friendship very necessary. These friendships will help me in life. Furthermore, my friends sometimes encourage me to become more confident to overcome hard times in life.

Last but not least, I really hope all of you have your own friendships in life. Needless to say, friendship is a precious present. Each of us will feel it in our own way.

January 7th, 2007

Benn Mace

The speed of your blink
The angle of your smile
The pattern of your hair
The rhythm of your breath
The color of your eyes in a dim light
The warmth, or coolness, of your hands

The poetry you love
The slope of your script
The degree of your sibilance
The path of the freckles on your arm
The distance between your chin and your lip

If you turn your head when you cough
If you scrunch your nose when you sneeze
If your most urgent thoughts escape through a mouth full
If the corners of your eyebrows lift or sink when you sing

How you hold a spoon
How your calluses feel
How your laughing shoulders move

What library books you keep
What thoughts occupy your nights

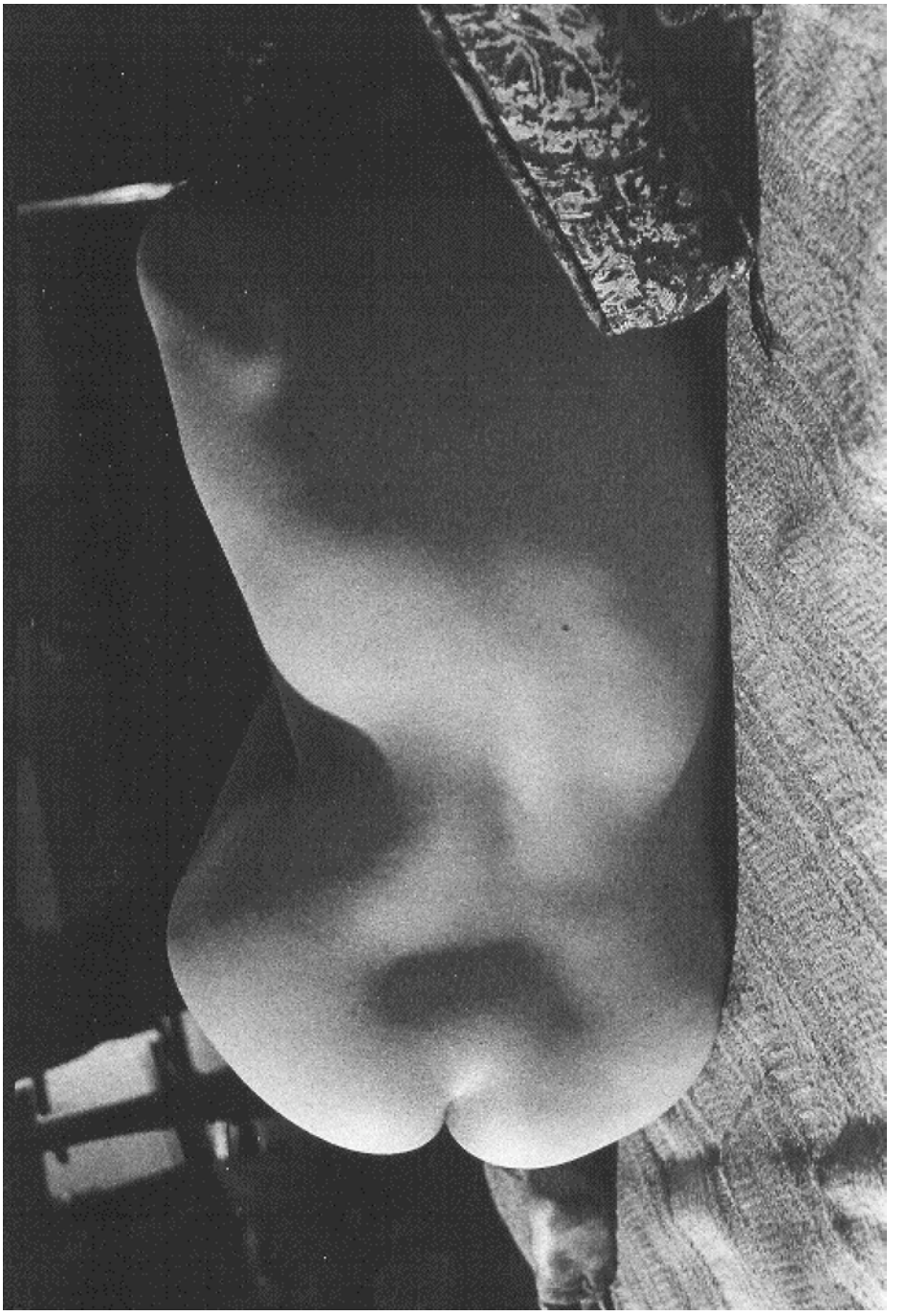
These things caught my heart's eye, but convention tells me to look away.

What a Way To Ride — Amanda Bowles

Honorable Mention - Artwork
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

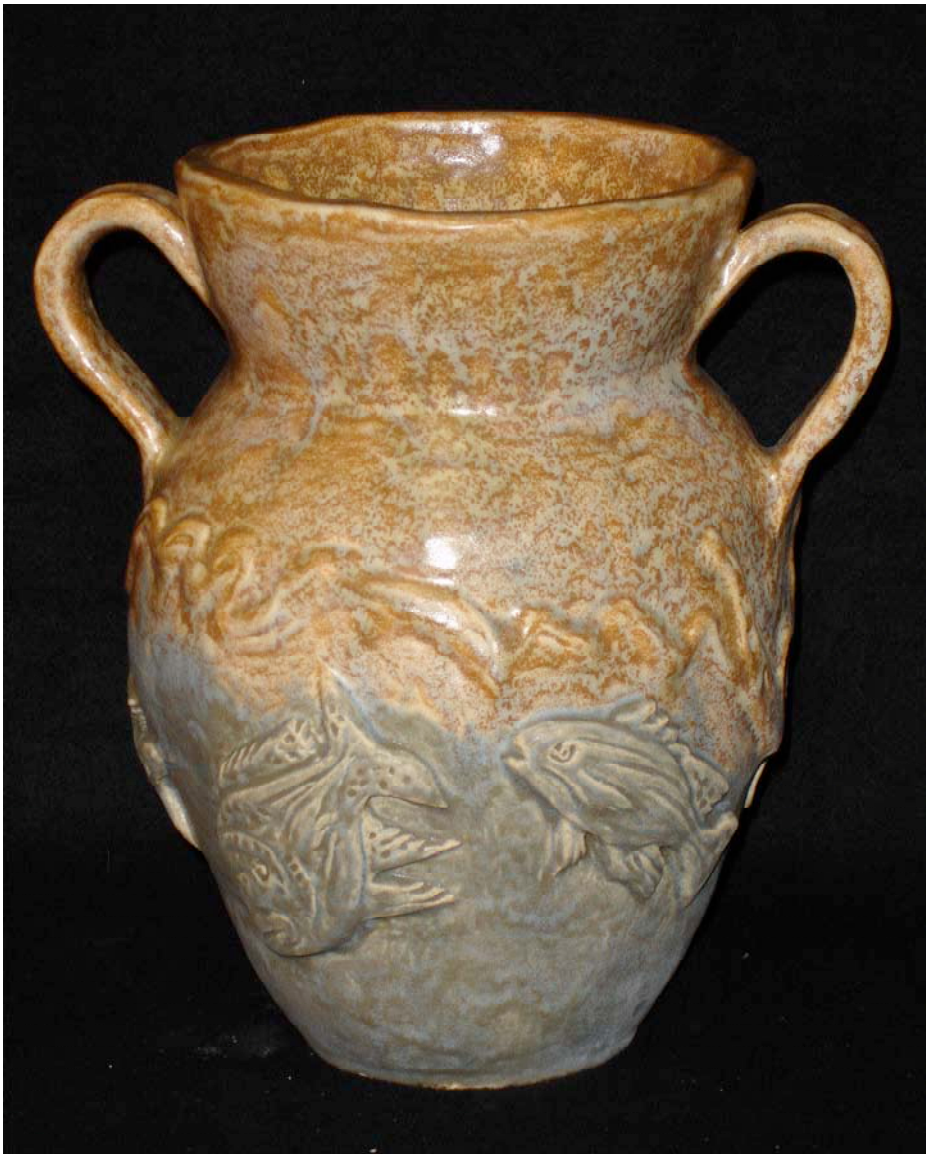
Lindsey **Gwynneth A. VanLaven**

Third Prize - Artwork
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007



Ocean Floor **Deborah McCue**

Second Prize - Artwork
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007



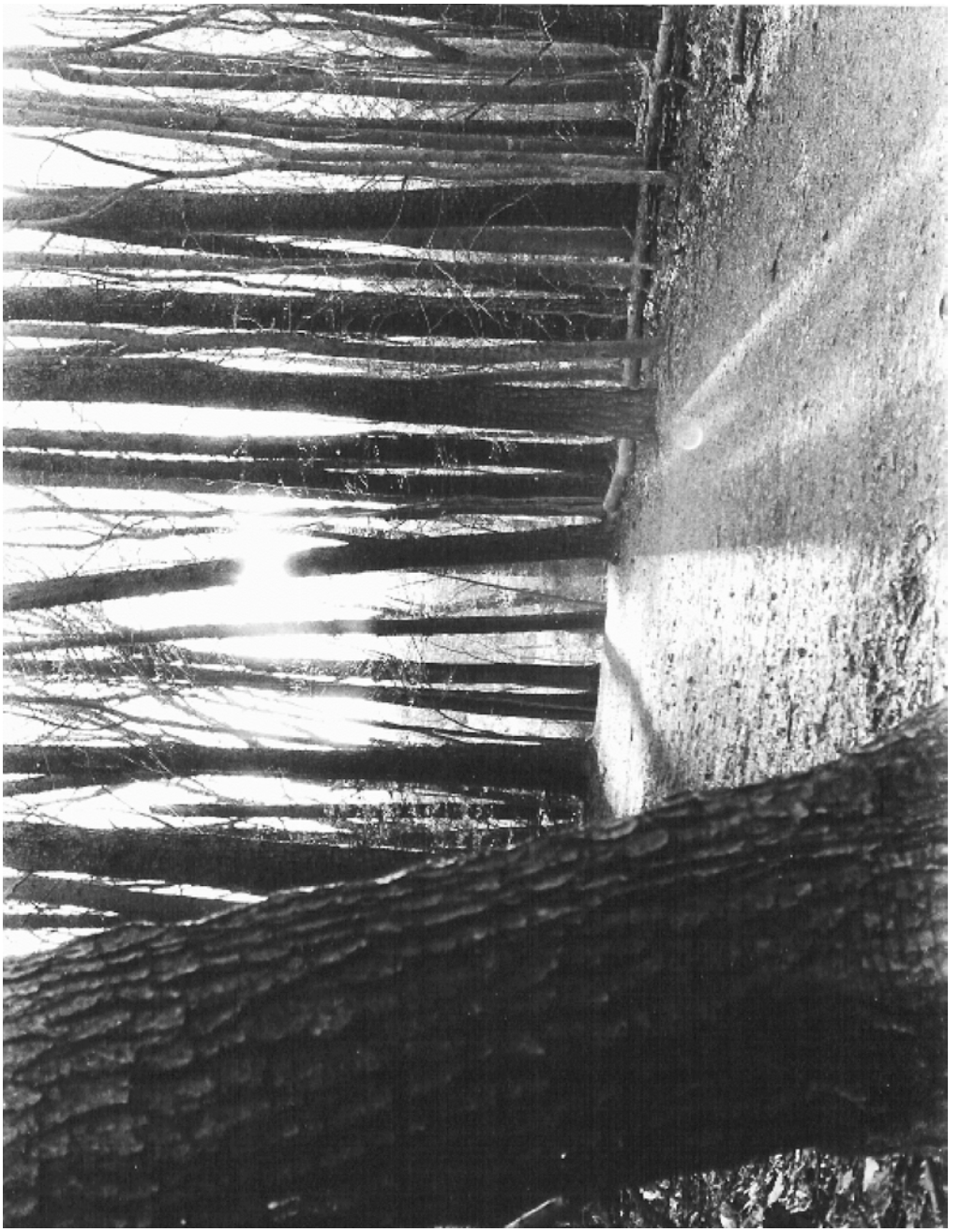
Hope in the Darkness

Amanda Bowles

Suntouched

Scott Palmer

Honorable Mention - Artwork
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007



Reflection — Marilyn Geldzahler

First Prize - Artwork
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

Covered Jar, Porcelain with Shino Glaze **Wayne Wilson**

Bench **Lewis Haddock**

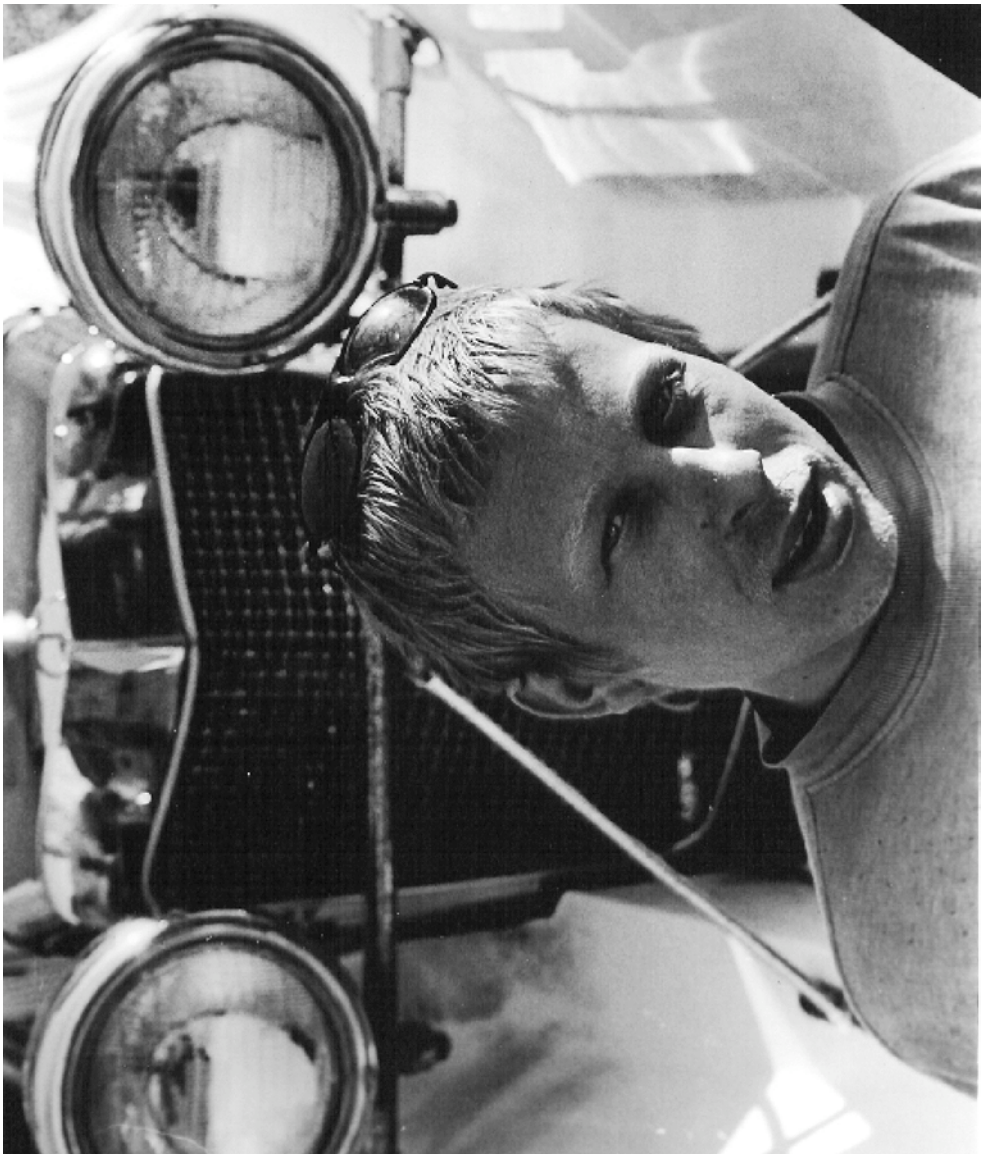
Control **Jihee Kang**

Starry Eyed Singer **Marilyn Geldzahler**

Untitled Photograph

Dondhon Namling

Honorable Mention - Artwork
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007



Pop Art **Mariam Abimbola**
Abbas

HEY SWEETIE HOW ARE YOU? WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME? I MISS YOU!!
10:00? ARE YOU WORKING LATER?
YES HONEY. BUT I PROMISE I'LL COME HOME IN TIME FOR OUR ANNIVERSARY.
I'LL BE HOME AT 10:00. LOVE YOU.

Untitled Photograph

Thomas Snowden

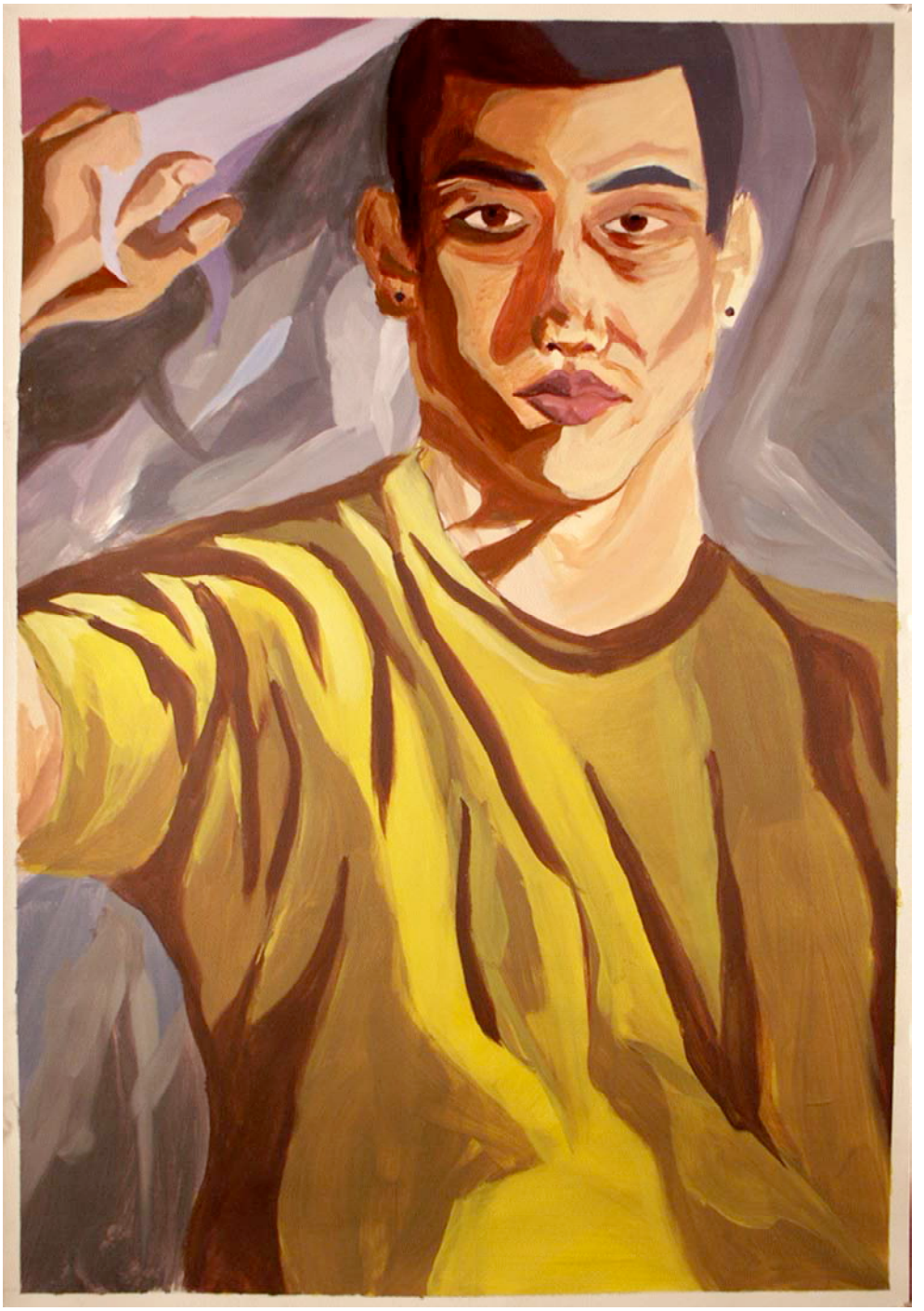
Time Travel

Jihee Kang

Faces **Jennifer C. Defazio**

Self Portrait #8

Wesley D. Kim



Untamed Rebel

Martha Johnson

Honorable Mention Prize - Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

I breathed in deeply, inhaling the sweet scent of earth, mountains, and summer, and relaxed. The warm evening's slight breeze brushed past my skin, a prickling sensation running up my neck as my hair stood slightly on end. I could taste something, just something, in the air, and I knew that a storm was coming.

I was used to storms. We had our share of them, ranging from sprinklings of rain that barely wetted the grass to full-blown thunderstorms that raged for hours and soaked everything in sight. The occasional tornado passed by us, but had never touched anywhere near our North Carolina home.

"Hey, Dave!" someone shouted from the house, and I turned around to see my younger brother standing in the doorway. Nick's jet-black hair, the same color as mine, had the unusual effect of making it look as if a crow had built a nest on his head. "Mom says to come in, dinner'll be ready soon."

"Tell her I'll be there in a minute," I shouted back. What did I care about getting a little wet? Thunderstorms were wild and uncontrollable, the bucking broncos of the natural world, the untamed rebels of the sky. I wanted to watch this one. And…there was something else, a memory of a dare I hadn't taken….

A few minutes of staring at the darkening sky rewarded me with a quick burst of light in the clouds, a clap of thunder, and the first drops of rain spattering on the paved driveway. The gray thunderheads blanketed the once bright blue sky, turning the world dark in minutes, blotting out the sun like a candle snuffed out by the wind.

I decided to walk down the driveway, just to the end to watch the storm. As I made my way down the hill to the main road, I felt the swift, wind-propelled rain buffeting me as I sloshed through the mud, water soaking through my sneakers. The wind was getting stronger, and I thought I felt each water droplet bite into my skin.

As I walked, I caught a drop of rainwater on my tongue. It tasted fresh and sweet, not at all like tap or bottled water. It tasted of sun, sky, and summer.

I found myself at the foot of the driveway, next to the mailbox. Reaching over to the rusted metal, I ran two fingers over the familiar embossed letters—*Moore* and *2415*. Rain beat out a drumroll on the mailbox, the metallic, almost musical sounds punctuated by the vibrations I felt in my fingertips as the raindrops hit.

The rain pattering on the street reminded me of why I was really standing out there, other than seeing the storm. The other guys. That day, when they first came up with the dare, and I rose to their bait….

My hands tightened into fists, and I gritted my teeth. I'd chickened out, even though that storm had been small in comparison to the one I faced now. Sure, I'd been young, young enough to be forgiven for being scared, but among the kids I was still branded: *coward*.

The wind seemed to whisper that word as I stared up into the bleak gray emptiness that was the sky. *Coward…coward…coward*…My hands tightened into fists. There was no

way I was going to answer to that name again—ever again. Today, I was going to prove it.

A sudden bolt of lightning hurled bright strands of copper fire through the sky, and was followed almost immediately by a huge clap of thunder that seemed to shake the very ground beneath my feet. I stared defiantly up at the flashing sky. *Let's see what you've got*, I thought, more to the storm than to myself.

As if it had heard me, the storm picked up in speed and intensity. Driving rain shot down like bullets from the sky, slapping at my face and hands, trickling down the back of my neck, making my hair stand on end.

Sloshing through the mud in the side of the road, I made for the woods—the woods that were like a second home to me, the woods I'd grown up crashing through. I knew them like the back of my hand.

Or so I thought.

I knew the woods when the weather was good. I knew them when the air was calm and they were full of life. But the woods were completely different when they were being soaked by a huge thunderstorm. The good firm earth had been transformed into a slushy marshland through which I sloshed in already mud-caked sneakers, making a squeaking, squishing noise.

A glance at the sky shot a pang of anxiety into my heart. It was changing from the usual dark gray to a lighter, sickly yellow shade. Thick, wet haze clouded the details of the sky, and the clouds were fuzzy beyond.

I sloshed for a few more minutes, trudging through the wet mud and trying to keep from losing my shoes in the sticky mess. The trees above me, I noted, were starting to bend over and their leaves flipped around in the wind that was beginning to pick up. The rain was blown diagonally, striking the ground at an angle rather than straight down.

I had reached the Circle, Nick's and my name for a clearing inside the woods where grass, rather than ferns and trees, carpeted the ground. It was quiet here—strangely quiet. The winds hadn't died down; in fact, they were actually growing swifter. The rain seemed softer here, and the claps of thunder seemed far off rather than right near me. I frowned; the clouds were still there, and the sky was not improving; if anything, the patch of sickly yellow was growing. I wondered if it was over, if the storm had simply chosen a strange way to leave, but then I saw it.

It was a huge cylindrical cloud, its sides like torn fabric, whipping around in the wind. It was dark gray, with green and brown mixed in where it had torn trees and branches from the forest and sucked them up, past the point of no return, deep into the tornado.

The sound was incredible. It was a little like a train, but a hundred times louder. The very sound seemed to press in on my ears, and even with palms clapped firmly over my ears I could still feel the deep vibration in my bones.

Above the tornado was a ceiling of black thunderheads, throwing the world around me into shadow. The rest of the sky was a pale, sickly yellow-gray, striking fear into my heart.

No, I thought, *don't fear it*. Don't be a coward.

"I'm not a coward," I muttered, more to myself than to the cloud.

I held my ground and watched as the tornado swung wildly around, uprooting trees and snapping others in half like toothpicks. It was surrounded by raging thunderstorms that flashed and boomed, accompanying the creature that was screaming with power in the center.

The beast roared again, whirling with a noise like a locomotive. The thunderstorm around it was bright with strands of light accented by instant claps of thunder. It was close, and it was coming for me.

Sheets of rain tore down on me, spattering on my already soaked clothes. I shook with cold and anger. Standing out from the trees, I screamed my rage at the storm.

"I'm not afraid!" I shouted. "I'm not a coward!"

Salty tears of anger mixed with the rainwater already running down my cheeks. I glared at the wild, raging tornado, the untamed rebel of the sky. The roaring was growing louder, rising almost to a scream, its wild cry of triumph. *Coward…coward…coward*, it seemed to howl into the night.

A wave of realization washed over me, temporarily blocking out everything else. I had lost. The tornado was triumphant. It was too much for me, or I wasn't enough for it. I was helpless, like a lost kitten. I was dead meat.

I stood like a statue, as if in a daze, as the tornado crept closer, staring open-mouthed at the whirling gray horror that whirled before me. Now I could see as trees were torn from the earth, their branches snapping as the tornado scooped them up and tossed them high in the air as easily as a cat playing with a feather.

The winds were now kicking up dust, dirt, and sand, which were clinging to my face, making my throat itch and clouding my already bleary vision. The ground was shaking beneath my feet, the earth rolling like the sea, and the air whipped around wildly—first left, then right, then straight at my face, blasting me head-on….

I blinked. *What the hell am I doing?* I thought incredulously. A quick glance around told me that I was near the stream. Trying hopelessly to shake the dirt from my eyes and clear my vision, I dove for the streambed. I whirled around, panic-stricken, searching for somewhere to hide. A cave, a hole, even just the streambed would do. Then I saw it—a wide part of the stream where the rushing water had eroded the earth on one side, leaving a hollow large enough for me to fit in. I ran over, soggy sneakers splashing, the frigid water stinging my skin as I reached the small cave-like hollow. I ducked underneath and wondered if the seemingly weak earth above me, held together only by tree roots and age, would ever withstand the force of the huge tornado that was currently ripping towards me.

Time seemed to stop. The stream lapped almost peacefully at my ankles; a green leaf floated serenely through a deep pool of stream water. I clung to the rope-like roots and awaited the inevitable horror that I could hear tearing through the earth and grass, approaching more and more quickly…

The tornado hit the area I was in with what felt like a train wreck. I felt myself slammed into a stone-hard wall of sound and wind. The sound was like a thousand people screaming, the wind like a huge vacuum cleaner sucking everything in. Nothing could escape, nothing was safe.

Twigs and sticks battered my shaking frame as they were drawn toward the tornado, and I buried my face in the cool earth around me. The stream was no longer quietly lapping at my feet, but whipping against my legs in its mad rush to meet the twisted pillar of death that called it with its wild scream, drew it closer with its arms of swirling air and matter.

The flying droplets of stream water were indistinguishable from the rainwater: both were whipping past me, not moving downward at all but parallel to the ground, racing one another to the terrible cyclone.

All I could do was hang on to the tree roots for dear life and hope that the end came soon, whatever that end might be like. I didn't care about anything but hanging on, resisting with some difficulty the winds that were sucking me towards the roaring, swirling funnel of sound and wind, from which there could be no escape.

Hang on, I told myself. *Just hang on!*

It went on and on, the endless battle between me and the tornado. Now I was fighting to stay alive; not to lose my brand of *coward*, not to prove my courage, just to earn the right to the rest of my life. The wind roared in my ears, and I had to fight for every breath I drew, for the wind snatched away most of the bits of air I tried to inhale.

Once, I nearly lost it. This was at the height of the storm, when the roaring was unbearable, but any scream that escaped my lips was instantly drowned in the cry of the tornado. The winds pulling at me from every side picked up and, my face white with shock, I felt my hand slip from the root it was clinging to. For a minute I crouched there, fighting the wind, pitting my own strength against the unbeatable force of nature.

It was hopeless, and I knew it. I could never fight my way back through the immense winds that were now reaching trailing, spindly fingers of air out to me, to grab me, pull me in, snatch me away from these tree roots that were my only hope….

But for once, fate was in my favor, and gradually, I felt the winds beginning to subside—and, along with them, my own strength. I couldn't hang on with one arm much longer, but finally I managed to summon the strength to reach my shaking, numb, wind-burned fingers out to the tree root and hang on for dear life.

After that, the winds began to subside. The rain gradually shifted from shooting sideways to falling normally, their pitter-pat on the ground like a lullaby. The winds that tore at my exhausted body finally began to let go their hold, moving on to wherever the tornado, their ringleader, took them.

Huddled beneath the tree roots and soft earth, I slipped into a stupor that was neither sleep nor wakefulness. Part of me, my eyes and ears and wind-battered nerves, stayed awake, always watching in case the creature returned. But the rest of me—my mind, my consciousness, my muscles—fell asleep, unaware of anything that happened in the outside world.

The last bits of wind drifted past like spectres of some other realm. Their power was nothing compared to the tornado, and it seemed to me that they knew it. They might have been powerful winds once, but now they had diminished to these, mere ghosts of their former selves.

And then it was over. The winds were quieting, the roar finally subsiding as the tornado moved off, the rain diminishing to a quiet, cool patter on the ground. Much to my surprise, I was still alive and breathing, clinging to the underside of the overhanging earth in the streambed. What was left of the stream washed against my ankles, and I noticed that my teeth were chattering. I couldn't move; every muscle in my body was stiff and rigid, aching from the effort of keeping me anchored solidly to the tree's strong, trustworthy roots.

I moved one finger experimentally. It was numb, and tingled when I moved it. I began gradually loosening my other fingers, then my hand, easing it off of the root only to discover that it was caked with mud and blood—the rough bark had cut my palm as I was yanked back and forth by the winds. Freeing my other hand, I found that it was in much

the same condition.

My legs were the hardest to move because they had suffered more under the bitter chill of the stream water. The sneakers on my feet were completely soaked, my feet sloshing in the water trapped inside, and I had the nasty feeling that I couldn't feel my toes at all.

Standing up hurt; I yelped in pain as I straightened up. I heard and felt four different sickening *pop* sounds in my back.

But despite the pain, despite the numb, windburned fingers and face, despite the soaked shoes and frozen toes, I was alive, and I knew it. I was moving. I was *breathing*, without cruel winds tearing the air away from me. For no reason other than this mad joy at being alive, I smiled, and felt my chapped bottom lip crack, and the warm, salty drop of blood that followed felt not like a wound, but like a badge of glory.

I had survived the tornado. I had earned a new respect for the powers of nature. I had even done some growing up along the way.

But most of all, I was alive. *I was alive.*

Untitled Drawing — Jae Hong Haam

Tomorrow's Yesterday

Katherine Ayesha Raheem

Tomorrow is just going to be
Another yesterday
Open your tiny eyes and see
The sun's come out to play
But the world's still wrapped in black
Everything turns gray
It's just another of tomorrow's
Empty yesterdays.
Wake up in someone else's bed
In their different clothes
Wearing their different head
And now you see the eerie light
Shining through the bedroom wall
As you go spinning your way towards it
You're predestined to fall.
The scent of sex is in the air
And you smile 'cause you got lucky—
But that was yesterday.
And now you are a little girl
Smiling, fresh and innocent
But soon enough
Tomorrow's yesterday
Will come take you away
And even though the walls are pink
Your dirty soul is cold and gray
Your old man's lips pull back to frown
You're standing in the water now
Walking just like Jesus
In tomorrow's yesterday.

Father Time

Arash Almasi

I don't know what it takes to maintain a relationship.

My father left our family at age 4.

I have problems with fidelity.

I was 8 years old the last time I heard
from him.

I am terrified of commitment, but I'm not exactly sure what that means.

It was a birthday card, wrapped around a
five dollar bill.

I found the right one, but immediately lost her.

Years ago I had a dream—of my parents' wedding. I think it's a memory.

I cheated on her with someone I didn't love.

I have 2 half brothers and 1 half sister. All older than me.

She's pregnant.

In Memory

Gianna Marie Lishman

At four AM
The phone call came
It cut your sleep

The roof went last
It crushed their skulls,
The smoke first filled their lungs.
They did not feel
The heat of flames that would destroy
Them all. Tucked in their stalls, knee deep in straw
Their latches drawn and bolted.
Gigantic lungs,
Collapse and
Swallow
Venomous ash,
Desperately searching
For air.
Then went to earth,
Their feeble legs
Too starved for
Air
To hold such heavy heads.

Lulled to sleep by the great inferno,
To the echo
Of a damp October night
Alive with nature's somber song
They died that night in a collision of forces
Drowned out by the sounds of futile sirens
As a helicopter, a news hungry vulture
Circled high
Above the endless smoke
Whose velvety touch blackened all that it graced

And aching screams of those who could do nothing
But watch
The flames consume their long gone horses
And you woke that early October morning
And for the rest of your life
You will starve for sleep
Where you can wake to find ten stunning horses
Tucked safe inside the bright red barn.

Carrying On

Katrina Smith

First Prize - Creative Non-Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

This is the bedroom of a normal nineteen year old, festooned with rock star posters, cluttered with books, video game controllers, and guitars; the curtains are drawn, and in the half-light of late afternoon you can just make out the long, lanky shape of the man perched on the end of the bed. He doesn't notice you standing in the doorway, staring with curiosity at him; he's bending over a bass with utmost concentration, a slight frown on his lips as his long fingers dance a rhythm across the strings. Maybe your shadow falling over what little light fills the small room makes him look up, or maybe it's the little, involuntary sound you make when you realize he's playing one of your favorite songs, but after a quick introduction he moves over easily, making room for you to sit down next to him. The easy conversation you were unable to make with your boyfriend's mother downstairs, just a minute ago, flows freely with his brother, the bass player, the invalid. You have no way of knowing, right now, that this is the first conversation he's had with someone who's not his family in weeks; that the easy smile that flashes across his lips has become a luxury for him. You don't know how much it means to him, though you will later; for now you simply talk, about music, about his brother, about the meaning of life. But you can't help but wonder at the strange yellow pallor of his complexion; and when he shifts the bass against his legs, the collar of his shirt falls open to expose a long, angry scar disappearing down the length of his chest. His eyes meet yours and read the unspoken question there. Without changing his expression, without losing the smile he's worn since you walked into the room, he tells you he has medullary carcinoma, and he's recovering from his fifth surgery. *I'm sorry*, you say, the words stuttering out from between your lips into an awkward silence, and you hate yourself for saying them, hate yourself for the condescension and the pity that crept into your voice; when he told you, there was no self-pity in his own.

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2 AM, Denny's. He's sitting across from you with a cup of coffee, watching you chain smoke and arguing with you about religion. You've moved into his parents' house for the couple of months before you get married to his brother. Your fiancé, a US Marine, has duties that keep him apart from you. Although you're more comfortable with his family, Mat is still the only one you feel like yourself with. You hijack him, on nights when you can't sleep, for coffee and cigarettes and conversation.

You feel confident enough, in this moment of easy companionship, to ask a question.

How do you do it?

He tilts his head towards you and waits.

The strength, you say to him. *The way you manage to have so much of yourself left over to give to everyone else, despite everything you have to deal with.*

He becomes quiet across the table, fiddling absently with the salt and pepper shakers. You inhale a breath of smoke and wait.

It's like this, he begins, curling his hands around the coffee cup, his shoulders hunching

forward towards you. *I found out I had cancer when I was 15 years old. I watched everyone falling apart around me—my mother, my father, my brothers and sister, my grandparents. I didn't have the luxury of falling apart too. Someone had to be strong to hold things together, and that someone had to be me.*

And at this point, he adds, *I'm used to it.*

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You're married, now, and you've moved out of your in-laws' house, so he has to call you to tell you the news.

I've met a girl, he says, *and her name is Sarah.*

The excitement in his voice is palpable; it crackles across the line. You spend an hour on the phone as he describes her character, her beauty, the way he makes her laugh, the way she makes him feel normal. A warm feeling of contentment spreads through you; finally, he's found another piece of life, someone to stand by him, lean on, like you have in his brother. You can't stop smiling for him.

Sarah will be there, four years later, when he dies, watching her dreams and her life die along with him, just as she's been there every step of the way, making him feel normal. They'll spend their last Valentine's Day together in the hospital, a sheet across the window, the nurses forbidden to enter. He'll ask an ICU nurse to go get her flowers, and her eyes will widen, begin to water, when she sees them waiting for her, a dozen red roses and a homemade card in his handwriting.

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He answers the phone. It's the hospital.

We've found some abnormalities on your CT scan, they say. *Can you come in?*

I don't think you understand, he says. *I've been in cancer treatments in New York for two weeks, and I have a dinner date with my girlfriend tonight.*

It looks serious, the woman says.

Not as serious as seeing the woman I love, he says. *I'm not dying tonight. I'll see you tomorrow.*

He hangs up the phone and dresses for his dinner date.

He always did know how to prioritize.

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He's sitting on your couch, your son in his lap, his face frozen in a look of abject terror as he views this tiny, fragile person. His nervous caution melts in the face of an infant's conquering smile, and you watch him enjoying the quiet closeness of a moment he'll never have with children of his own. They laugh together, the baby and his uncle, and one tiny, flailing hand reaches up towards the face looming over him, popping the cap off his tracheotomy. It goes flying across the room, and you hurry to pick it up, flushed and embarrassed for him. He's not, though; when he can speak again he coos down at his nephew, *what a strong boy you are!* Life has thrown so much at him; at this point, very little could ever be embarrassing again.

****

He's been in the hospital for six months, and they've told us this time will be the end. They've prophesied his death three times now, and the clustered group of mourners, armed with white faces, brave, fake smiles and Starbucks lattes, wants to believe that they're wrong now, too. Something in the air of the room, though, in the still, silent faces of his nurses, tells you this is a false hope.

You're happy you had a quiet moment alone with him, the week before, where you could finally say some of the things he's always known: that you love him, that you cherish him, that he's become a brother in truth as well as name. You make plans, after these exhausting moments of vulnerability, to go see Metallica when they come into town next year, when he's better, when he's whole.

Those are illusory plans too, at least for you. He hadn't lost hope yet, and he won't stop fighting until the end, so you entertain his fantasies and make promises you both know will never be kept. Even if he recovers this time, he'll be in too much pain to walk again.

Today, he can't speak to you. His body is a bright husk of what it used to be; unconscious, it breathes shallowly, in heaving, irregular sighs and whistles. You take a position by his feet, placing your hands on the outside of the blanket. Through the layers his feet radiate cold.

You slip your hand into your husband's, holding it tightly, feeling the sharp roughness of his skin with such detail that it is as if you can sense the unique pressure of his fingerprint, and the warm, alive nature of his flesh against yours makes the moment a little less numb. Next to you, your mother-in-law holds her other son's hand, pale against the blanket, and he opens his eyes, at the last, to find his mother's face as a final, shattering breath escapes, and a dull ache begins inside you that will never fully heal.

His body turns blue, an empty husk; even the small, sharp brightness it had when you first entered the room has fled. It's not him, any longer, but you're reluctant to leave, reluctant to admit defeat. Your world, a world that is often unfair, seems less just than before, that a spark so bright could burn out. There is relief, because an ordeal has ended, but a relief without joy or solace.

Your birthdays are one week apart. You would have turned 25 together in three months.

You begin the process of trying to heal. It's a misnomer. You don't heal from this sort of pain. You just carry on with it.

Winter is a Bitter Lover

Martha Johnson

Honorable Mention - Poetry
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

The winter is a cold
and bitter lover, brushing his icy wind-fingers under my coat
to tickle my back. He whispers
into my ears, begging, pleading, moaning.

I turn
and walk in the other direction
and feel him again
- hands in my hair -
- blowing soft, icy kisses from over the lake -
and nuzzling against my neck.

He wants me; he can touch me, but
never hold me
never encompass my warmth in his cold.
Perhaps that's why
he draws away and remains distant
and fades away entirely
when April comes.

The Critic

Linda Jean King

After Kay Ryan's *The Hinge of Spring*

Atop the roof taunts the mockingbird
Sufficiently loud so just he is heard
He mocks the tunes of poet and loon
Til the melody and rondeau's in ruin
Yet his notes are someone else's words

Mockingbirds are one of the things
Shotguns are for. One quick pull
A few fluttering feathers
And a whole chorus of new songs
Burst out on page and bough

Untitled Photograph

Thomas Snowden

The Iron String

S. Ann Robinson

Second Prize - Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

"Damn!" I mutter as the alarm in the Suburban goes off. "F@#&!" I wriggle the coat hanger free and hunch down, clutching the back of my hospital gown to protect my bare behind from both the cool night air and the roving security lights. Luckily no one pays attention to car alarms any more, and I am able to quickly (if you can call *anything* in my condition "quick") move on down the row of parked cars unnoticed. Two more aborted tries and there at last is my refuge: an old Volvo sedan with dents and rusted wheel wells that give it the look of ancient parchment that has been burnt at the edges. A bumper sticker reads, "You can make me go to college, but you can't make me think." Instinctively I know the door will be unlocked.

"Thank you, Jesus!" The combined smell of stale cigarettes and beer washes over me. I haven't been in a car that smells this delicious since I was a little girl standing on the bench seat beside my daddy, like a guardian angel on sentry duty. Dad would often let me go with him on his many drives around town smoking and drinking in a fit of angst after a fight with Mom, who—in my opinion—was far too serious and unforgiving. I adored my father. Our excursions always ended with me falling asleep in the back seat hugging my favorite teddy bear, while Dad drove home. Never again have I felt so safe, so bonded to another human being.

"*Bucket* seats…." No little girl stands beside her daddy in *this* car.

I know it's naïve to hope that a key has been stashed somewhere, but I search anyway. What I do find is a CD with a cover photo of angry(?) young men, fists raised in the air. The title reads, "Green Day." But the black and white outlines remind me of Civil Rights rallies in the 60s. I smile… then toss aside the disk and continue my search for keys. Maybe in the back. I slide between the bucket seats, careful to avoid sexual assault by the gear shift lever, and open the ash tray. Nothing but butts…one with a smudge of lipstick on it. I grin. This back seat has seen some action.

But the loss of hope has exhausted me, and I can feel my hands tremble as I raise them to my pounding head. Leaning back, I'm surprised by a hard edge jabbing my bottom, and I reach around and pull out a leather-bound copy of essays by Emerson. Emerson! My favorite. My fingers trace the ridges in the binding and bring it up to inhale the leather scent. Ahhh. Not new leather, but the smell is still intoxicating. I close my eyes and inhale again deeply, as though the mere act of breathing could infuse me with the Over-soul itself.

"Hey!" A voice interrupts. A young man wearing a gray sweater and creased jeans is opening the front door. His straight, brown hair is two weeks past a good cut, and a cigarette clings to the edge of his bottom lip like the last autumn leaf before winter. Just as the butt lets go, he grabs it and flicks it to the ground with practiced ease.

"What the… You can't…." His eyes widen even further as he notices my hospital gown. Stunned silence.

"Oh, I don't usually dress this way," I begin, pulling the blanket up around me in spite of the cold sweat that never seems to go away, "but I didn't have time to change."

"Okay, Ma'am," he looks around, then reaches for his cell phone. "I'll call for help."

"NO! No, please! Wait! Just listen for five minutes. Then if you want to call someone, I'll go in… I promise."

He hesitates, stares back at the hospital entrance, then pulls off his sweater and throws it in a wad onto the passenger seat. Underneath he is wearing a concert T-shirt. I give him time to sit down behind the wheel and light another cigarette.

"My name is Lynn." I pause. He exhales sideways out a crack in the window, then pulls tobacco shreds from the tip of his tongue and wipes them on his pants.

"Will."

"Short for 'William'?" I stall for time, hoping my heart will stop racing and I'll be able to think of a coherent sentence.

He winces, "Yes."

"Will…were you visiting someone in the hospital?" It's a prayer.

He nods, looks down and then away. "My grandmother." His jaw tightens.

"How is she?"

"Not good." He shakes his head and inhales quickly.

"I'm sorry… Forgive me, but let me guess: she's a silent ghost of the energetic woman you once knew… drugged and wired to machines…unable to determine her own fate, and barely able to recognize you…."

The color drains from Will's face. I press on, wondering if he can see that my gown is now drenched in sweat. "The light that once blazed in her eyes for you has gone out. People in white coats call her 'dear,' but treat her like a science experiment… an object with no brains."

His eyes flash and stare hard at me, then squeeze shut.

"I'm so sorry," I repeat. "But I'm trying to not *be* that experiment. My husband and son are both dead, and my daughter-in-law is in there signing me into a nursing home."

"That doesn't make any sense," Will shakes his head. "You're too young for that."

"Actually, I have acute diabetes and could go into a coma at any time. The hospital won't release me unless there is someone to care for me, and Carrie —my daughter-in-law —travels with her job."

Will looks at me anxiously again.

"It's OKAY," I say, blinking rapidly to clear my blurring vision. "I just want to go home… I want to die on my own back porch, where I can lie on the sofa and look through the screen at my roses… remember my husband playing ball there with our son. …It was *my* grandmother's house… I can see her hanging clothes on the line… smell her roast in the oven… It's time... for me… to go home."

His eyes grow soft. "I don't know…."

My fingers curve around the copy of Emerson. "What was it Emerson said about trust…? Something like, *Trust yourself…Every…*"

"*…heart*" Will sits up and continues the quote, "*vibrates...*"

"*…to that iron string*." We finish in unison, our eyes locked in glowing recognition.

"It's bad enough that people tell us how to *begin* our lives, don't you think?" I close my argument, with sudden muscle pain giving my voice an edge I couldn't have managed otherwise. "Surely once we have finally learned to trust ourselves we shouldn't have to give it all up in the end!"

With one smooth movement Will tosses his cigarette out the window, turns the key in the ignition and puts the car into gear.

"Where to, Miss?" he asks as the car begins to roll.

Smiling, I sigh and slide deeper into the blanket, lean my head against the window, and hug the Emerson volume like a teddy bear. "I knew someone like you once…a long time ago…."

Untitled Sculpture — Kat Harris

Skyline Flashbacks

Susanna Katherine Fix

Third Prize - Poetry
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

today
the sky was open range
to ghostly horsetails,
spun from wisps of cloud
and running wild and free
across the azure meadows—
curling in the wake of wind.

tonight
a veil of tears in the eye of the sky
blurred the lines
that cut the moon out
from the rest of heaven.
a murky glow,
mingling light with dark—
a watery haze
of moonlight and shadow.

last night
the sky looked like wyoming,
crossing the threshold
of the bighorn mountains,
where the valley stretches wide
beneath their feet—
the distance
rising layer by layer
in rose and violet,
in gold and blue,
building a sloping stairway to heights
and stars emerging from their daytime rest.
it looked like illinois at sunset,
sun sunk just below a skyline
built of blackened trees
before a backlight of rich colors,
falling down from deep-hued blue
to lighter,
warmer,
vibrant shades
mingling with the oak-and-poplar-lined horizon.

Echoes of Red

Katrina Smith

Third Prize - Creative Non-Fiction
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

I had something profound to write, something soft and deeply moving, full of intrigue and mystery and above all answers. In the halting aftermath of another song, another movement through and apart from those embers burning silently during the witching hour, it came to me with mocking words, did a sweet, flitting dance through the water-logged night, and departed just as swiftly as it came.

I had something profound to write, something to shock you to the bone and melt away your disillusionment. Something that would counter the meaninglessness that generally filters your way through those holes in your consciousness daily; something to stop and make you really think, for once. It was the silent shock of a red scarf against the gray of a D.C. winter; it was the flash of white seen out of the corner of your eye, the deeper pool of darkness in an unlit room. It was a mystery, and at once, a mystery revealed. It simply was, and the interpretation of it was the substance and the mockery, together.

I had something profound to write, something soft and deeply moving, but in that moment between the song and the ember, between the understanding and the dawning of that understanding, it slipped silently from my head to enlighten another. It walked a swift dream walk through my mind, it danced with abandon in my heart, it kissed my bruises with pursed lips and a bit of tongue, but it swayed sexily out of my head, leaving only promises behind, a hit of frustrated memory, and a dull ache like a hangover gone terribly wrong.

And in the darkness, in the quiet mourning that came after, I was left only with the memory of this thing, and without the words, the cause to put it to paper. I would bring you understanding, but it is not mine to bring; I would bring you peace, but it would end in bewilderment.

The closest I can come is an image, and here I will share it with you, that you might taste the echo of the thing:

There is a woman, mid- to late twenties, squeezed uncomfortably into what she thinks is a sexy top. It is too small for her, and cutting mercilessly at her flesh, but she wears it, along with too tight pants and six inch stilettos. She's not comfortable, she's not sexy, her size is enhanced rather than minimized, and yet she wears this thing. It is dreadfully wrong for her, but there is a purpose in the wrongness. She has an ugly tattoo and ratty hair, but she walks on anyway, clutching an imitation designer handbag and peering as best she can through a bar filled with the smoky refuse of a hundred people's beleaguered lungs.

With curled tongues and sweaty palms, unprepossessing and unattractive boys surround her. They assume, since she is badly attired and still there, she must be looking for what they are—something to dull the nothing, whether it be alcohol or cheap sex. She wears this scent like a perfume, and picks one seemingly at random.

She smiles, and in the knowledge of the desperate act she's about to become, is beauty transformed.

In this same moment, there is the echo of soft, woolen wings beating against the glass

storefront, a ponderous moth with vibrant colors streaked across its underside. It beats in futile fashion at the glass, caught in the mirror image of its own reflection, and finally settles in precarious futility against it, content with the illusion of belonging to the light, still apart from it.

You Lucky Dog

Jennifer C. Defazio

The Best Surprise of My Life

Huonglien Thi Nguyen

Honorable Mention - ESL
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

The best surprise I have ever had was in Vietnam with my father when I was sixteen years old. It was a special day because that was the first time I met my father. I never imagined this would happen to me, and I felt very emotional when I experienced this situation.

On September 19, 1996, I went to my niece's birthday party in the afternoon. She lived about two miles from my house. I was having a very good time with my niece when suddenly one of my cousins came and told me that my father had come back from America to Vietnam and wanted to see me.

At that moment, I was mad at her because I thought that she wanted to make fun of me. I told her, "Go away! I don't want to listen to that anymore." However, she was serious and told me that it was the truth. She implored me to go home right away because my father really wanted to see me. My cousin begged me many times, but I wouldn't believe her. Finally, my aunt told me to go home and see if my father was actually there. My aunt said to my cousin, "If you are playing a joke on her, I will punish you." I hurriedly took a bicycle rickshaw to go back home.

All the way home, I still couldn't believe it was true. Even though I thought it was a joke, I wished it was true because I had never met my father and I truly wanted to. I didn't even know what my father looked like. I sat in the rickshaw, and I wondered if he was small like me, or a fat man. I felt nervous and my heart pounded harder and harder. Even though I had never seen him, I thought about him often.

When I arrived home, the entire neighborhood was in front of my house. The neighbors told me that my father had come back to see me. Then I went straight into my home and asked my mom what was happening. She told me, "Your father is in the living room waiting for you." Now I believed it was true. I went slowly, slowly into the living room and saw him. I was in shock. There was a little man with black hair sitting on a chair watching me. He looked just like me. I walked slowly into his arms; we hugged each other and cried. Also, all of my neighbors cried too because they felt much compassion about my situation.

After that, my father and I became acquainted with each other. He asked me many things about my life, but he was upset when he heard that I had stopped going to school. I explained to him that I couldn't go to school because I had to work and help my mom. He said, "Because of the war, I could not come back for such a long time. If I went back, the communists would detain me."

Eventually, my father and I got along well. He wanted me to go with him to Saigon and stay with him until he went back to America. I felt very nervous and scared to go with him because I didn't know if he really loved me or not. I told my mom, "If you go, I will go." Fortunately, my mom agreed to this, since she wanted my father and me to have a good relationship.

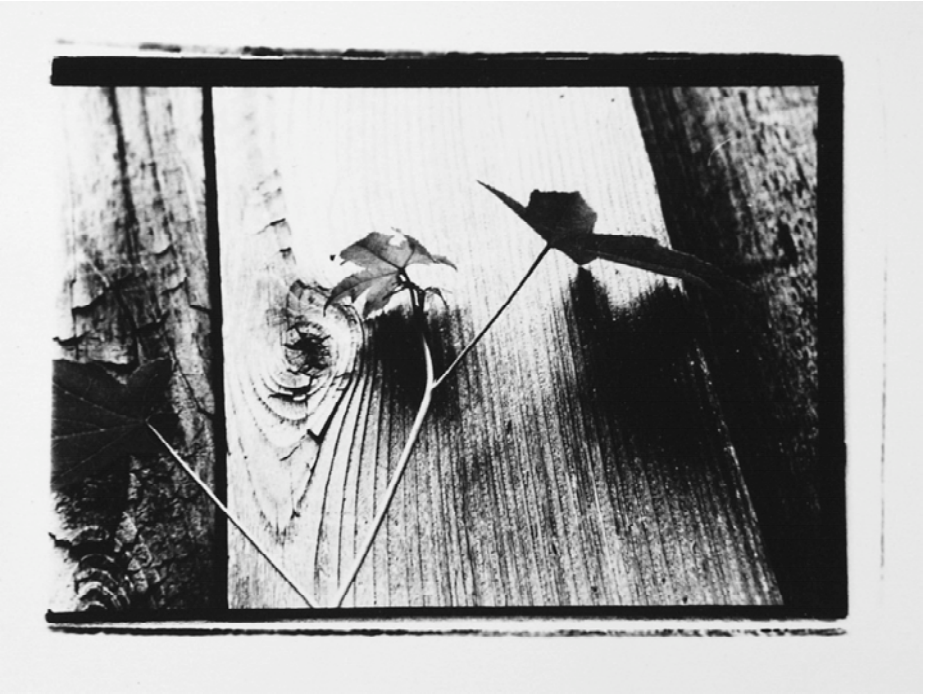
I made the decision to stay in Saigon with my father until he could return to America. I stayed with him for a month. We got to know one another, and I could understand him

very well. He was a good father. Finally he discussed with my mom the idea of taking me to America with him so he could compensate for all the years we had lost. After that, the time passed so quickly. My father went back to America, and I stayed in Saigon with his aunt so he could communicate with me more easily while I was waiting for my visa.

Unfortunately, my happiness disappeared because my mom left too. I had to stay with my father's aunt in Ho Chi Minh City to do my visa. I had wished to live with my mom and my dad for so long. Then suddenly my wish had come true briefly and then gone away. I sat in my room and I looked out the window; I understood how difficult life was for children who live without parents. However, my father came back and forth from America to Vietnam to visit me. This was a consolation to me; I didn't feel so alone. After many years my visa was approved, and I came to America.

Now I have lived very happily with my father in Alexandria for four years. Day by day, I feel very close to him, and we have a good relationship. I see him everyday now, but I have never forgotten September 19, 1996—the day I received the best surprise of my life.

Leaf on a Fence — Lewis Haddock



My Father's Luck

Anne-Marie Cooney Pastorkovich

April, 1944

We were so young and frightened
Huddled in a field
Waiting for the truck to come
To drive us back home.

An eagle with broken wings
Smoldering, dying
Benny, Jackie, Kenny, Joe…
Men and machine silenced.

Harry and I drag our silk
Behind us… lost, dazed…
A farmer comes, bearing beers
I finish Harry's.

The beer is good in England.
Last night we sergeants
Drank a merry, boastful toast
To luck! "Luck," we said.

She had no name, our Fortress
Shiny, new, silver
She had seemed doomed from the start…
Were we doomed with her?

A jeep brings the flight surgeon
He gives us bad news
A nurse gives us sleeping pills
We pass out and dream.

We go back to our old hut
To collect our things
Joe's shave kit, Jack's trousers…
We hurry it up.

The MPs lock the hut door
Like sealing a tomb
We move to our new quarters
And join our new crew.

We are old men grown tired

Huddled in a plane
Twisting my rosary beads,
I dream of Brooklyn.

Oxford Sky

Thomas Snowden

Diamante Poem

Kareema Shoura

First Prize - ESL
Calliope Best in Publication Awards 2007

Egypt
East
First language for Arab Countries
Arabic
Right side, *Hereof*
Islamic religion, Arabic Culture
The country which works for peace
Pyramids, Sphinx, Rushmore, Statue of Liberty
The country that fights for freedom
Christian religion, Western Culture
Left side, Letters
English
First language for the U.S.A
West
America